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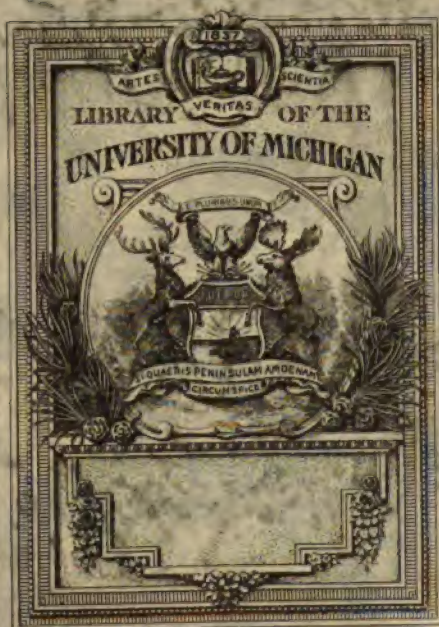
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THE  
THEOLOGICAL WORKS  
OF  
ISAAC BARROW, D.D.



**Cambridge:**

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THE  
THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF

47611

ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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IN NINE VOLUMES.

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Edited for the Syndics of the University Press

BY

THE REV. ALEXANDER NAPIER, M.A.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, VICAR OF HOLEHAM, NORFOLK.

VOLUME V.

CONTAINING

SEVENTEEN SERMONS ON THE CREED.

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THE  
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EXPLAINED AND VINDICATED  
IN SEVERAL  
SERMONS  
UPON  
THE CHIEF ARTICLES OF IT  
CONTAINED IN  
THE APOSTLES' CREED.



## TO THE KING.

SIR,

**I** MOST humbly present to Your Majesty a Work, the author whereof, my son, was much the more dear to me for his constant and exemplary loyalty. Not only the general obligation of a subject always engaged him to Your Majesty's service, but the particular favours wherewith you were pleased to honour and encourage his studies, might probably have induced him to a Dedication of this kind, if his modesty would have let him think any thing of his worthy Your Majesty's patronage. This, which I here offer, is, by those who are better able to judge of it than myself, valued as the most considerable of his productions: but it chiefly presumes to entitle itself to your royal protection, because it is an Explication and Vindication of that Christian Faith, whereof Your Majesty is the great Defender.

And, Sir, I beg leave to take this opportunity to make as public an acknowledgment as I can, of that great goodness Your Majesty has shewn in the acceptance and recompense of



the fidelity I have through a course of many years borne to the cause of Your Majesty and your Royal Father.

Long may Your Majesty live and reign under the happy conduct and blessing of that Wisdom, in whose right hand is length of days, and in her left hand riches and honour.

I am,  
May it please your Majesty,  
Your Majesty's most humble,  
faithful, and obedient  
Subject and Servant,  
THOMAS BARROW.

**I** believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of  
heaven and earth :

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the  
Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was  
crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell;  
the third day he rose again from the dead, He ascended  
into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the  
Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge  
the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic  
Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness  
of Sins; the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life  
Everlasting. Amen.



I Believe, &c.

## SERMON I.

OF THE EVIL AND UNREASONABLENESS OF  
INFIDELITY.

---

HEB. III. 12.

*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.*

IN these words, two particulars naturally do offer SERM.  
I.  
themselves to our observation; an assertion implied, that infidelity is a sinful distemper of heart; and a duty recommended, that we be careful to void or correct that distemper: of these to declare the one, and to press the other, shall be the scope of my discourse.

That infidelity is a sinful distemper of heart, appeareth by divers express testimonies of Scripture, and by many good reasons grounded thereon.

It is by our Saviour in terms called sin: *When* John xvi.  
*he is come, he will reprove the world of sin,—of* <sup>8, 9.</sup>  
*sin, because they believe not in me: and, If I had* John xv.  
*not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had* <sup>22;</sup>  
*sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin: and,* viii. 24;  
*If ye were blind, ye should not have had sin; but* ix. 41;  
*now ye say, We see, therefore your sin abideth.*  
What sin? that of infidelity, for which they were culpable, having such powerful means and arguments to believe imparted to them, without due effect.

SERM.

I.

John iii.  
18;  
xii. 48.

It hath a condemnation ground on thereon ;  
*He, saith our Saviour, that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God : but condemnation ever doth suppose faultiness\*.*

2 Thess. ii.  
11, 12;

It hath sore punishment denounced thereto ;  
*God, saith St Paul, shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had*

i. 8.

*pleasure in unrighteousness ; and, Our Lord, saith he, at his coming to judgment, will take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; whence*

Rev. xxi.  
8.

*among those, who have their part in the lake burning with fire and brimstone, the fearful, and unbelievers (that is, they who fear to profess, or refuse to believe the Christian doctrine) are reckoned in the first place ; which implieth infidelity to be a heinous sin.*

1 John iii.  
23.

It is also such, because it is a transgression of  
 a principal law, or Divine command ; *This, saith St John, is ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ, the command of him, That*

John vi.  
29.

*we should believe ; This, saith our Lord, is τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Θεοῦ, the signal work of God, (which God requireth of us,) that ye believe on him, whom he*

Mark i. 15.

*hath sent : that was a duty, which our Lord and his Apostles chiefly did teach, enjoin, and press ; wherefore, correspondently, infidelity is a great sin ;*

1 John iii.  
4.

*according to St John's notion, that Sin is ἀνομία, the transgression of a law.*

But the sinfulness of infidelity will appear more

\* Οὐ γὰρ μόνον τὸ μὴ εἶκειν ταῖς ἐντολαῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἀπιστεῖν αὐταῖς χαλεπωτάτην ἐπάγει τὴν κόλασιν.—Chrys. ad Demet. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 140.

fully by considering its nature and ingredients; its causes; its properties and adjuncts; its effects and consequences. SERM.  
I.

I. In its nature it doth involve an affected blindness and ignorance of the noblest and most useful truths; a bad use of reason, and most culpable imprudence; disregard of God's providence, or despite thereto; abuse of his grace; bad opinions of him, and bad affections toward him; for

God in exceeding goodness and kindness to mankind hath proposed a doctrine, in itself faithful and worthy of all acceptation, containing most excellent truths instructive of our mind and directive of our practice, toward attainment of salvation and eternal felicity; special overtures of mercy and grace most needful to us in our state of sinful guilt, of weakness, of wretchedness; high encouragements and rich promises of reward for obedience: such a doctrine, with all its benefits, infidelity doth reject, defeating the counsel of God, crossing his earnest desires of our welfare, despising his goodness and patience.

To this doctrine God hath yielded manifold clear attestations, declaring it to proceed from himself; ancient presignifications and predictions; audible voices and visible apparitions from heaven, innumerable miraculous works, Providence concurring to the maintenance and propagation of it against most powerful oppositions and disadvantages: but all these testimonies infidelity slighteth, not fearing to give their author the lie, which wicked boldness St John chargeth on it; *He*, saith the Apostle, *that believeth not God, hath*

Tit. ii. 11;  
iii. 4.  
1 Tim. i. 15.

Luke vii. 30.  
Matt. xxiii. 37.  
1 Tim. ii. 4.  
Luke x. 16.  
Rom. ii. 4.  
2 Pet. iii. 9, 15.

1 Pet. i. 16.  
Acts iii. 18.  
Luke xxiv. 44.  
Heb. ii. 4.  
Acts iv. 33;  
xix. 20;  
ii. 47;  
vi. 7;  
xii. 24.  
1 John v. 10



**SERM.** *made him a liar ; because he believeth not the testimony that God gave of his Son.*  
**I.**

Many plain arguments, sufficient to convince our minds, and win our belief, God hath furnished ; the dictates of natural conscience, the testimony of experience, the records of history, the consent of the best and wisest men, do all conspire to prove the truth, to recommend the usefulness of this doctrine ; but infidelity will not regard, will not weigh, will not yield to reason.

God by his providence doth offer means and motives inducing to belief, by the promulgation of his Gospel, and exhortation of his ministers : but all such methods infidelity doth void and frustrate ; thrusting away the word, turning away the ear from the truth, letting the seed fall beside us, casting away the law of the Lord of hosts ; in effect (as those in Job) saying to God, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.*

2 Cor. v. 20.  
 Acts xiii. 46.  
 2 Tim. iv. 4.  
 Matt. xiii. 14.  
 Isai. v. 24.  
 Job xxi. 14.

God by his grace doth shine upon our hearts, doth attract our wills to compliance with his will, doth excite our affections to relish his truth : but infidelity doth resist his Spirit, doth quench the heavenly light, doth smother all the suggestions and motions of Divine grace within us.

John vi. 44.  
 Rev. iii. 20.  
 Acts vii. 51.  
 1 Thess. v. 19.  
 2 Cor. iv. 4.

What God asserteth, infidelity denieth, questioning his veracity ; what God commandeth, infidelity doth not approve, contesting his wisdom ; what God promiseth, infidelity will not confide in, distrusting his fidelity, or his power : such is its behaviour (so injurious, so rude, so foolish) toward God, and his truth ; this briefly is its nature, manifestly involving great pravity, iniquity, and impiety.

II. The causes and sources from whence it springeth (touched in Scripture, and obvious to experience) are those which follow. SERM.  
I.

I It commonly doth proceed from negligence, or drowsy inobservance and carelessness; when men being possessed with a spirit of slumber, or being amused with secular entertainments, do not mind the concerns of their soul, or regard the means by God's merciful care presented for their conversion; being in regard to religious matters, of Gallio's humour, caring for none of those things: thus, when the King in the Gospel sent to invite persons to his wedding feast, it is said, *Οἱ δὲ ἀμελήσαντες ἀπῆλθον*, *They being careless, or not regarding it, went their ways, one to his field, another to his trade*. Of such the Apostle to the Hebrews saith, *How shall we escape, τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας, who regard not so great salvation, exhibited to us?* Of such Wisdom complaineth; *I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded*. No man: the greatest part, indeed, of men are upon this account infidels, for that being wholly taken up in pursuit of worldly affairs and divertisements, in amassing of wealth, in driving on projects of ambition, in enjoying sensual pleasures, in gratifying their fancy and humour with vain curiosities, or sports, they can hardly lend an ear to instruction; so they become unacquainted with the notions of Christian doctrine; the which to them are as the seed falling by the way-side, which those fowls of the air do snatch and devour before it sinketh down into the earth, or doth come under consideration. Hence is unbelief commonly termed not hearing God's

Acts xviii.  
17.

Matt. xxii.  
5.

Heb. ii. 3.

Prov. i.

Isai. lrv.  
12;

lxvi. 4.  
Jer. vii.  
31.

Matt. xiii.  
4

**SERM.** voice, not hearkening to God's word, the din of  
**I.** worldly business rendering men deaf to Divine suggestions.

2 Another source of infidelity is sloth, which indisposeth men to undergo the fatigue of seriously attending to the doctrine propounded, of examining its grounds, of weighing the reasons inducing to believe; whence at first hearing, if the notions hap not to hit their fancy, they do slight it before they fully understand it, or know its grounds; thence at least they must needs fail of a firm and steady belief, the which can alone be founded on a clear apprehension of the matter, and perception of its agreeableness to reason: so when the Athenians did hear St Paul declaring the grand points of faith, somewhat in his discourse uncouth to their conceit intercurring, some of them did scorn, others did neglect his doctrine; *Some mocked; others said, We will hear thee again of this matter;* so **Acts xvii.** Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a Christian, **32;** but had not the industry to prosecute his inquiry, till he arrived to a full satisfaction. A solid faith (with clear understanding and firm persuasion) doth indeed, no less than any science, require sedulous and persevering study; so that as a man can never be learned, who will not be studious; so a sluggard cannot prove a good believer.

**xxvi. 28.**

3 Infidelity doth arise from stupidity, or dullness of apprehension, (I mean not that which is natural; for any man in his senses, how low soever otherwise in parts or improvements, is capable to understand the Christian doctrine, and to perceive reason sufficient to convince him of its truth; but) contracted by voluntary indispositions and defects;

a stupidity rising from mists of prejudice, from  
 steams of lust and passion, from rust grown on the  
 mind by want of exercising it in observing and  
 comparing things ; whence men cannot apprehend  
 the clearest notions plainly represented to them,  
 nor discern the force of arguments, however evident  
 and cogent ; but are like those wizards in Job, who  
 meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope at  
 noonday, as in the night.

SERM.  
I.

Job v. 14.  
Isai. lix.  
10.  
Deut.  
xxviii. 29.

This is that which is so often charged on the  
 Jews as cause of their infidelity ; who did hear but  
 not understand, and did see but not perceive ;  
 because their heart was gross, and their ears were  
 dull of hearing, and their eyes were closed ; this is  
 that *πώρωσις καρδίας*, that *numbness of heart*, which  
 is represented as the common obstruction to the  
 perception and admission of our Lord's doctrine :  
 this our Lord blamed in his own disciples, when he  
 did increpate thus ; *O fools, and slow of heart*  
*to believe all that the prophets have spoken !* Of  
 this the Apostle doth complain, telling the He-  
 brews, that they were incapable of improvement  
 in knowledge, because they were *ωθοποι ταῖς ἀκοαῖς*,  
*dull of hearing* for want of skill and use, not  
 having their senses exercised to discern both good  
 and evil : there is, indeed, to a sound and robust  
 faith required a good perspicacy of apprehension, a  
 penetrancy of judgment, a vigour and quickness of  
 mind, grounded in the purity of our faculties, and  
 confirmed by exercise of them in consideration of  
 spiritual things.

Acts  
xxviii. 26.  
Isai. vi. 9.  
Matt. xiii.  
14.  
John xii.  
40.  
Rom. xi.  
7, 8, 25.  
Eph. iv.  
18.  
Isai. xxix.  
10.  
2 Cor. iii.  
14.  
Mark iii.  
5 ;  
vi. 52 ;  
viii. 17.  
Luke xxiv.  
45.  
Heb. v. 11,  
14.

4 Another cause of infidelity is a bad judg-  
 ment ; corrupted with prejudicate notions, and  
 partial inclinations to falsehood. Men are apt to

SERM. I. entertain prejudices favourable to their natural appetites and humours; to their lusts; to their present interests; dictating to them, that wealth, dignity, fame, pleasure, ease, are things most desirable, and necessary ingredients of happiness; so that it is a sad thing in any case to want them; all men have strong inclinations biassing them toward such things; it is a hard thing to shake off such prejudices, and to check such inclinations; it is therefore not easy to entertain a doctrine representing such things indifferent, obliging us sometimes to reject them, always to be moderate in the pursuit and enjoyment of them: wherefore infidelity will naturally spring up in a mind not cleansed from those corruptions of judgment.

Matt. xvi.  
23.  
John vi.  
60, 66.

5 Another source of infidelity is perverseness of will, which hindereth men from entertaining notions disagreeable to their fond or froward humour: Ὡ γένεα ἄπιστος καὶ διεστραμμένη, *O faithless and perverse generation!* those epithets are well coupled, for he that is perverse will be faithless; in proportion to the one the other bad quality will prevail. *The weapons of the apostolical warfare* (against the infidel world) *were*, as St Paul telleth us, *mighty to the casting down of strong holds*: so it was; and the Apostles, by their discourse and demeanour, effectually did force many a strong fortress to surrender; but the will of some men is an impregnable bulwark against all batteries of discourse<sup>b</sup>; they are so invincibly stubborn, as to hold out against the clearest evidence and mightiest force of reason: if they do not like what you say,

Matt. xvii.  
17.

2 Cor. x. 4,  
5.

<sup>b</sup> Οὐ πάντα δυσωπεῖ τὰ σημεῖα, ἀλλὰ μόνους τοὺς εὐγνώμονας.—  
Const. Apost. viii. 1. [Cotel. Pat. Apost. Tom. i. p. 388.]

if it cross any humour of theirs, be it clear as day, SERM. I.  
 be it firm as an adamant, they will not admit it;  
 you shall not persuade them, though you do persuade them. Such was the temper of the Jews, whom St Stephen therefore calleth a stiffnecked Acts vii.  
 people, uncircumcised in heart and ears; who 51, 54. Jer. vi. 10; ix. 26.  
 although they did hear the most winning discourse that ever was uttered, although they saw the most admirable works that ever were performed, yet would they not yield to the doctrine; the mean garb of the persons teaching it, the spirituality of its design, the strict goodness of its precepts, and the like considerations, not sorting with their fancies and desires; they hoping for a Messias arrayed with gay appearances of external grandeur and splendour, whose chief work it should be to settle their nation in a state of worldly prosperity and glory.

6 This is that hardness of heart, which is so often represented as an obstruction of belief; this hindered Pharaoh, notwithstanding all those mighty Exod. vii. 4, 22; viii. 15, 19; ix. 12.  
 works performed before him, from hearkening to God's word, and regarding the mischiefs threatened to come on him for his disobedience; *I will not*, said he, *let Israel go*; his will was his reason, which no persuasion, no judgment could subdue: this was the cause of that monstrous infidelity in the Israelites, which baffled all the methods which God used to persuade and convert them; *Notwithstanding*, it is said, *they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God*: whence that exhortation to them; *To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*. And to obdura- 2 Kings xvii. 14. Ps. xc. 8. Heb. iii. 8.



SERM. I. tion, the disbelief of the Gospel upon the Apostles' preaching is in like manner ascribed; *Paul*, it is said in the Acts, *went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God: but divers were hardened, and believed not: and, Exhort one another daily, saith the Apostle, lest any of you be hardened (in unbelief) through the deceitfulness of sin.*

Acts xix.  
8, 9.

Heb. iii  
13; Vid.  
Mark xvi.  
14.

Isai. xxx.  
10.

John vi.  
60, 66.  
1 Pet. ii. 8.

Matt. xxiv.  
10;  
xiii. 21.

Matt. xi.  
6.

7 Of kin to that perverseness of heart is that squeamish delicacy and niceness of humour, which will not let men entertain or savour any thing, anywise seeming hard or harsh to them; if they cannot presently comprehend all that is said, if they can frame any cavil or little exception against it, if every scruple be not voided, if any thing be required distasteful to their sense, they are offended, and their faith is choked; you must, to satisfy them, speak to them smooth things, which nowise grate on their conceit or pleasure: so when our Lord discoursed somewhat mysteriously, representing himself in the figure of heavenly bread (typified by the manna of old) given for the world, to sustain men in life; *Many of his disciples, hearing this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? and, From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him: this is that which is called being scandalized at the word, and stumbling at it; concerning which our Saviour saith, Blessed is he, whoever shall not be offended in me.*

In regard to this weakness, the Apostles were fain in their instructions to use prudent dispensation, proposing only to some persons the most easy

points of doctrine, they not being able to digest SERM. I.  
 such as were more tough and difficult: *I have,* 1 Cor. iii. 2.  
 saith St Paul, *fed you with milk, and not with meat;*  
*for hitherto ye were not able to bear it—for ye are yet*  
*carnal; and, Ye, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews,* Heb. v. 12.  
*are such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

Such were even the Apostles themselves in their  
 minority; not savouring the things of God; being Matt. xvi.  
 offended at our Lord's discourses, when he spake 23;  
 to them of suffering; and with his condition, when xxvi. 31.  
 he entered into it.

8 With these dispositions is connected a want  
 of love to truth; the which if a man hath not, he  
 cannot well entertain such notions as the Gospel  
 propoundeth, being nowise grateful to carnal sense  
 and appetite: this cause St Paul doth assign of  
 the Pagan doctors falling into so gross errors and  
 vices, *Because they did not like to retain God in* Rom. i. 28.  
*their knowledge;* and of men's revolting from  
 Christian truth to Antichristian imposture—*Be-* 2 Thess. ii.  
*cause they received not the love of the truth, that they* 10, 11.  
*might be saved: for which cause God shall send*  
*them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*  
 nothing indeed, but an impartial and ingenuous  
 love of truth (overbalancing all corrupt prejudices  
 and affections) can engage a man heartily to em-  
 brace this holy and pure doctrine, can preserve a  
 man in a firm adherence thereto.

9 A grand cause of infidelity is pride, the  
 which doth interpose various bars to the admission  
 of Christian truth; for before a man can believe,  
*πᾶν ὑψωμα*, every height (every towering imagina- 2 Cor. x. 5.  
 tion and conceit) that exalteth itself against the  
 knowledge of God must be cast down.

SERM.

I.

[Pride fills a man with vanity and an affectation of seeming wise in special manner above others, thereby disposing him to maintain paradoxes, and to nauseate common truths received and believed by the generality of mankind.\*]

A proud man is ever averse from renouncing his prejudices, and correcting his errors; doing which implieth a confession of weakness, ignorance, and folly, consequently depresseth him in his own conceit, and seemeth to impair that credit which he had with others from his wisdom; neither of which events he is able to endure.

He that is wise in his own conceit, will hug that conceit, and thence is incapable to learn:

Prov. xxvi.  
12.

*There is, saith Solomon, more hope of a fool than of him; and he that affecteth the praise of men, will not easily part with it for the sake of truth:*

John v. 44;  
xii. 43.

whence, *How*, saith our Lord, *can ye believe, who receive glory one of another?* how can ye, retaining such affections, be disposed to avow yourselves to have been ignorants and fools, whenas ye were reputed for learned and wise? how can ye endure to become novices, who did pass for doctors? how can ye allow yourselves so blind and weak, as to have been deceived in your former judgment of things?

1 Cor. iii.  
18.

He that is conceited of his own wisdom, strength of parts, and improvement in knowledge, cannot submit his mind to notions which he cannot easily comprehend and penetrate; he will scorn to have his understanding baffled or puzzled by sublime mysteries of faith; he will not easily yield any thing too high for his wit to reach, or too

John iii. 9. knotty for him to unloose: *How can these things*

\* This paragraph is an addition of Archbishop Tillotson's.

be? what reason can there be for this? I cannot see how this can be true; this point is not intelligible: so he treateth the dictates of faith; not considering the feebleness and shallowness of his own reason: Hence not many wise men according to the flesh, (or who were conceited of their own wisdom, relying upon their natural faculties and means of knowledge,) not many scribes, or disputers of this world, did embrace the Christian truth, it appearing absurd and foolish to them; it being needful, that a man should be a fool, that he might, in this regard, become wise. SERM.  
I.

The prime notions of Christianity do also tend to the debasing human conceit, and to the exclusion of all glorying in ourselves; referring all to the praise and glory of God, ascribing all to his pure mercy, bounty, and grace: it representeth all men heinous sinners, void of all worth and merit, lapsed into a wretched state, altogether impotent, forlorn, and destitute of ability to help or relieve themselves; such notions proud hearts cannot digest; they cannot like to avow their infirmities, their defects, their wants, their vileness, and unworthiness; their distresses and miseries; they cannot endure to be entirely and absolutely beholden to favour and mercy for their happiness; such was the case of the Jews; who could not believe, because, *Going about to establish their own righteousness, they would not submit to the righteousness of God.* *Dextra mihi Deus*<sup>c</sup>, every proud man would say with the profane Mezentius. 1 Cor. i. 26;  
ii. 6.  
John vii. 26.  
1 Cor. i. 20;  
iii. 18.  
Rom. iii. 27;  
iv. 2, 16;  
ix. 11;  
xi. 6.  
1 Cor. i. 29;  
iii. 21.  
Eph. ii. 9.  
Tit. iii. 5.  
Rom. x. 3;  
ix. 31.

Christianity doth also much disparage and vilify those things, for which men are apt much to

<sup>c</sup> [Virg. *Æn.* x. 773.]

**SERM.** prize and pride themselves; it maketh small ac-  
**I.** count of wealth, of honour, of power, of wit, of  
 secular wisdom, of any human excellency or mun-  
 dane advantage: it levelleth the rich and the poor;  
 the prince and the peasant, the philosopher and idiot  
 in spiritual regards; yea far preferreth the meanest  
 and simplest person, endued with true piety, above  
 the mightiest and wealthiest, who is devoid thereof:  
 in the eye of it, *The righteous is more excellent*  
**Prov. xii.** *than his neighbour*, whatever he be in worldly re-  
**26.** gard or state: this a proud man cannot support; to  
 be divested of his imaginary privileges, to be de-  
 truded from his perch of eminency, to be set below  
 those whom he so much despiseth, is insupportable  
 to his spirit.

The practice of Christianity doth also expose  
 men to the scorn and censure of profane men; who  
 for their own solace, out of envy, revenge, diabolical  
 spite, are apt to deride and reproach all con-  
 scientious and resolute practisers of their duty, as  
 silly, credulous, superstitious, humorous, morose,  
 sullen folks: so that he that will be good, must re-  
 solve to bear that usage from them; like David; *I*  
**2 Sam. vi.** *will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in my*  
**22.** *own sight*: but with these sufferings a proud heart  
 cannot comport; it goeth too much against the  
 grain thereof to be contemned.

Christianity doth also indispensably require  
 duties, point blank opposite to pride; it placeth  
 humility among its chief virtues, as a base of  
 piety; it enjoineth us to think meanly of ourselves,  
 to disclaim our own worth and desert, to have no  
 complacency or confidence in any thing belonging  
 to us; not to aim at high things; to wave the

**Rom. xii.**  
**3, 16.**

regard and praise of men; it exacteth from us a SERM. I.  
sense of our vileness, remorse and contrition for  
our sins, with humble confession of them, self-Job xlii. 3.  
condemnation and abhorrence; it chargeth us to <sup>6.</sup>  
bear injuries and affronts patiently, without grievous  
resentment, without seeking or so much as  
wishing any revenge; to undergo disgraces, crosses,  
disasters, willingly and gladly; it obligeth us to  
prefer others before ourselves, sitting down in the  
lowest room, yielding to the meanest persons: to  
all which sorts of duty a proud mind hath an irre-  
concilable antipathy.

Phil. ii. 3.  
Rom. xii.  
10.  
1 Pet. v. 5.  
Luke xiv.  
10.  
Rom. xii.  
16.

A proud man, that is big and swollen with  
haughty conceit and stomach, cannot stoop down  
so low, cannot shrink in himself so much, as to  
enter into the strait gate, or to walk in the narrow  
way, which leadeth to life: he will be apt to con-  
temn wisdom and instruction.

Matt. vii.  
14.  
Prov. i. 7,  
30;  
v. 12;  
xiii. 13.

Shall I, will he say, such a gallant as I, so ac-  
complished in worth, so flourishing in dignity, so  
plump with wealth, so highly regarded and re-  
nowned among men, thus pitifully crouch and  
sneak? shall I deign to avow such beggarly notions,  
or bend to such homely duties? shall I disown my  
perfections, or forego my advantages? shall I pro-  
fess myself to have been a despicable worm, a  
villanous caitiff, a sorry wretch? shall I suffer  
myself to be flouted as a timorous religionist, a  
scrupulous precisian, a conscientious sneaksby?  
shall I lie down at the foot of mercy, puling in  
sorrow, whining in confession, bewailing my guilt,  
and craving pardon? shall I allow any man better  
or happier than myself? shall I receive those into  
consortship, or equality of rank with me, who

Isai. v. 24.  
Ezek. xx.  
13, 16, 24.  
Acts xiii.  
41.  
Luke x.  
16.  
Rom. ii. 4.

**SERM.** appear so much my inferiors? shall I be misused  
**I.** and trampled on, without doing myself right, and making them smart who shall presume to wrong or cross me? shall I be content to be nobody in the world? So the proud man will say in his heart, contesting the doctrines and duties of our Religion, and so disputing himself into infidelity.

10 Another spring of infidelity is pusillanimity, or want of good resolution and courage: *δειλοί καὶ ἄπιστοι*, *cowards and infidels*, are well joined among those who are devoted to the fiery lake; for timorous men dare not believe such doctrines, which engage them upon undertaking difficult, laborious, dangerous enterprises; upon undergoing hardships, pains, wants, disgraces; upon encountering those mighty and fierce enemies, with whom every faithful man continually doth wage war.

They have not the heart to look the world in the face, when it frowneth at them, menacing persecution and disgrace; but when affliction ariseth for the word, they are presently scandalized. It is said in the Gospel, that no man spake freely of our Lord for fear of the Jews: as it so did smother the profession and muzzle the mouth, so it doth often stifle faith itself, and quell the heart, men fearing to harbour in their very thoughts points dangerous and discountenanced by worldly power.

They have not also courage to adventure a combat with their own flesh, and those lusts, which war against their souls; to set upon correcting their temper, curbing their appetites, bridling their passions; keeping flesh and blood in order; upon pulling out their right eyes, and cutting off their right hands, and crucifying their members;

Matt. xiii.  
 21.  
 John vii.  
 13;  
 ix. 22;  
 xix. 38.

James iv.  
 1.  
 1 Pet. ii.  
 11.  
 Rom. vii.  
 23.

it daunteth them to attempt duties so harsh and painful. SERM.  
I.

They have not the resolution to withstand and repel temptations, and in so doing to wrestle with principalities and powers; to resist and baffle the strong one. To part with their ease, their wealth, their pleasure, their credit, their accommodations of life, is a thing, any thought whereof doth quash all inclination in a faint and fearful heart of complying with the Christian doctrine.

Christianity is a warfare; living after its rules is called fighting the good fight of faith; every true Christian is a good soldier of Jesus Christ; the state of Christians must be sometimes like that of the Apostles, who were troubled on every side; *Without were fightings, within were fears*: great courage therefore, and undaunted resolution, are required toward the undertaking this Religion, and the persisting in it cordially.

11 Infidelity doth also rise from sturdiness, fierceness, wildness, untamed animosity of spirit; so that a man will not endure to have his will crossed, to be under any law, to be curbed from any thing which he is prone to affect.

12 Blind zeal, grounded upon prejudice, disposing men to stiff adherence unto that which they have once been addicted and accustomed to, is in the Scripture frequently represented as a cause of infidelity. So the Jews being filled with zeal, contradicted the things spoken by St Paul; flying at his doctrine, without weighing it: so by instinct of zeal did St Paul himself persecute the Church;

Eph. vi.  
12.  
Luke xiv.  
31.  
1 Tim. i.  
18.  
Heb. xii.  
1 Tim. vi.  
12.  
2 Cor. vii.  
5.

Acts xiii.  
45;  
xvii. 5;  
v. 17.  
Rom. x. 2.  
Gal. iv. 17;  
i. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Κατὰ ζῆλον διώκων.—Phil. iii. 6.

Περισσὸς ἐμμανόμενος αὐτοῖς.—Acts xxvi. 11.



SERM. being exceedingly zealous for the traditions deli-  
 I. vered by his fathers.

13 In fine, infidelity doth issue from corruption of mind by any kind of brutish lust, any irregular passion, any bad inclination or habit<sup>o</sup>: any such evil disposition of soul doth obstruct the admission or entertainment of that doctrine, which doth prohibit and check it; doth condemn it, and brand it with infamy; doth denounce punishment and woe to it: whence, *Men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith*; and, *Men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth*, are attributes well conjoined by St Paul, as commonly jumping together in practice; and, *To them*, saith he, *that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled*: such pollution is not only consequent to, and connected with, but antecedent to infidelity, blinding the mind so as not to see the truth, and perverting the will so as not to close with it.

Faith and a good conscience are twins, born together, inseparable from each other, living and dying together; for the first, *Faith* is (as St Peter telleth us) nothing else but *the stipulation of a good conscience*, fully persuaded that Christianity is true, and firmly resolving to comply with it: and, *The end* (or drift and purport) of the evangelical doctrine is *charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned*: whence those Apostolical precepts, *To hold the mystery of*

\* Οὐ ῥάδιον ποτηρία συντρεφόμενον ἀναβλέψαι ταχέως πρὸς τὸ τῶν παρ' ἡμῶν δογμάτων ὕψος, ἀλλὰ χρή πάντων καθαρεύειν τῶν παθῶν τὸν μέλλοντα θηρᾶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. — Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. viii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 291.]

*faith in a pure conscience; and, To hold faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning the faith have made shipwreck: a man void of good conscience will not embark in Christianity; and having laid good conscience aside, he soon will make shipwreck of faith, by apostasy from it. Resolute indulgence to any one lust is apt to produce this effect.* SERM.  
I

If a man be covetous, he can hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven, or submit to that heavenly law, which forbiddeth us to treasure up treasures upon earth; which chargeth us to be liberal in communication of our goods; so as to give unto every one that asketh; which in some cases requireth to sell all our goods, and to give them to the poor; which declareth, that whosoever doth not bid farewell to all that he hath, cannot be a disciple of Christ; which ascribeth happiness to the poor, and denounceth woe to the rich, who have their consolation here. Preach such doctrine to a covetous person, and, as the young gentleman who had great possessions, he will go his way sorrowful; or will do like the Pharisees, who were covetous, and having heard our Saviour discourse such things, derided him, *ἐξευκτῆρίζον αὐτόν*: for, *The love of money, saith St Paul, is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith; ἀπεπλανήθησαν, they have wandered away, or apostatized from the faith.* Matt. xix.  
23;  
vi. 19.  
1 Tim. vi.  
18.  
Heb. xiii.  
16.  
Luke xvi.  
9;  
vi. 30.  
Matt. xix.  
20.  
Luke xiv.  
33;  
vi. 20, 24.

If a man be ambitious, he will not approve that doctrine, which prohibiteth us to affect, to seek, to admit glory, or to do any thing for its sake; but purely to seek God's honour, and in all our actions to regard it as our principal aim: which greatly Matt. xix.  
22.  
Luke xvi.  
14.  
1 Tim. vi.  
10.  
Phil. ii. 3.  
Gal. v. 26.  
John xii.  
43;  
v. 44.

**SERM.** disparageth all worldly glory, as vain, transitory, mischievous; which commandeth us in honour to prefer others before ourselves, and to sit down in the lowest room; which promiseth the best rewards to humility, and menaceth, that *Whoever exalteth himself shall be abased*; the profession and practice whereof are commonly attended with disgrace: such doctrines ambitious minds cannot admit; as it proved among the Jews; who therefore could not believe, because they received glory from one another; who therefore would not profess the faith, *Because they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God.*

If a man be envious, he will not like that doctrine, which enjoineth him to desire the good of his neighbour, as his own; to have complacence in the prosperity of his brethren; not to seek his own, but every man another's wealth, or welfare; to rejoice with them that rejoice, and mourn with those that mourn; which chargeth us to lay aside all envyings and emulations, under pain of damnation: he therefore who is possessed with an envious spirit, or evil eye, will look ill upon this doctrine; as the Jews did, who being full of envy and emulation, did reject the Gospel; it being a grievous eyesore to them, that the poor Gentiles were thereby admitted to favour and mercy.

If a man be revengeful or spiteful, he will be scandalized at that law, which commandeth us to love our enemies, to bless those that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, to pray for them that despitefully use us; which forbiddeth us to resist the evil, to render evil for evil, or railing for railing; which chargeth us to bear patiently and

freely to remit all injuries, under penalty of forfeiting all hopes of mercy from God ; which requireth us to depose all wrath, animosity, and malice, as inconsistent with our salvation : which doctrine how can a heart swelling with rancorous grudge or boiling with anger embrace? seeing it must be in meekness that we must receive the engrafted word, that is able to save our souls.

If a man be intemperate, he will loathe that doctrine, the precepts of which are, that we be temperate in all things, that we bring under our bodies, that we endure hardship as good soldiers of Christ; to avoid all excess; to possess our vessels in sanctification and honour; to mortify our members upon earth; to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul: with which precepts how can a luxurious and filthy heart comport?

In fine, whatever corrupt affection a man be possessed with, it will work in him a distaste and repugnance to that doctrine, which indispensably, as a condition of salvation, doth prescribe and require universal holiness, purity, innocence, virtue, and goodness; which doth not allow any one sin to be fostered or indulged; which threateneth wrath and vengeance upon all impiety, iniquity, impurity, wherein we do obstinately persist; indifferently, without any reserve or remedy; *Wherein the wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, that detain the truth in unrighteousness.*

An impure, a dissolute, a passionate soul cannot affect so holy notions, cannot comply with so strict rules, as the Gospel doth recommend; as a sore

SERM.  
I.

1 Thess. v.  
15.

Col. iii. 13.  
Eph. iv.

32.  
Matt. vi.

15;  
xviii. 35.

Col. iii. 8.  
1 Pet. ii. 1.

Gal. v. 20.  
Eph. iv.

37.  
James i.  
21.

2 Tim. iv.  
5.

1 Cor. ix.  
25, 27.

2 Tim. ii.  
3;

i. 8;  
iv. 5.

Eph. v. 18.  
1 Thess.

iv. 4.  
Col. iii. 5.

Gal. v. 24.  
1 Pet. ii.

11.

Eph. ii. 11;  
iv. 22.

Rom. vi. 6.  
1 Thess. iv.

3.  
Eph. v. 6.

Col. iii. 6.

Rom. i. 18;  
ii. 8.

SERM. I. eye cannot like the bright day; as a sickly palate cannot relish savoury food<sup>1</sup>. *Every one that doeth evil hateth the light*, because it discovereth to him his own vileness and folly; because it detecteth the sadness and wofulness of his condition; because it kindleth anguish and remorse within him; because it checketh him in the free pursuit of his bad designs, it dampeth the brisk enjoyment of his unlawful pleasures, it robbeth him of satisfaction and glee in any vicious course of practice.

John iii.  
20.

Every man is unwilling to entertain a bad conceit of himself, and to pass on himself a sad doom: he therefore will be apt to reject that doctrine, which being supposed true, he cannot but confess himself to be an arrant fool, he cannot but grant himself a forlorn wretch.

No man liketh to be galled, to be stung, to be racked with a sense of guilt, to be scared with a dread of punishment, to live under awe and apprehension of imminent danger; gladly therefore would he shun that doctrine, which demonstrateth him a grievous sinner, which speaketh dismal terror, which thundereth ghastly woe upon him. He cannot love that truth, which is so much his enemy, which so rudely treateth and severely persecuteth him; which telleth him so bad and unwelcome news<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ἡ ἐμπαθὴς ψυχὴ οὐ δύναται μέγα τι καὶ γενναῖον ἰδεῖν, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ὑπὸ τινὸς λήμης θολουμένη ἀμβλυωπίαν ὑπομένει τὴν χαλεπωτάτην.—Chrys. in Joh. Hom. xxiv. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 653.]

<sup>2</sup> Ἔστι γὰρ, ἔστι καὶ ἀπὸ τρόπων διεφθαρμένων, οὐκ ἀπὸ πολυπραγμοσύνης μόνον ἀκαίρου σκοτωθῆναι τὴν διάνοιαν.—Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> *They hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.*—Prov. i. 29; v. 12.

Who would be content to deem Omnipotency SERM. I. engaged against him? to fancy himself standing on the brink of a fiery lake? to hear a roaring lion, ready to devour him? to suppose that certain, which is so dreadful and sad to him?

Hence it is, that *The carnal mind is enmity to* Rom. viii. *God*; hence do bad men rebel against the light; Job xxiv. hence, *Foolish men shall not attain to wisdom, and sinners shall not see her; for she is far from* Ecclus. xv. 7, 8. *pride, and men that are liars cannot remember her.*

Hence a man desperately and resolutely wicked cannot but be willing to be an infidel, in his own defence, for his own quiet and ease; faith being a companion very incommodious, intolerably troublesome to a bad conscience<sup>b</sup>.

Being resolved not to forsake his lusts, he must quit those opinions which cross them; seeing it expedient that the Gospel should be false, he will be inclinable to think it so: thus he sinketh down, thus he tumbleth himself headlong into the gulf of infidelity.

The custom of sinning doth also by degrees so abate, and at length so destroy, the loathsomeness, the ugliness, the horror thereof, doth so reconcile it to our minds, yea conciliateth such a friendship to it, that we cannot easily believe it so horrid and base a thing as by the Gospel it is represented to us.

<sup>b</sup> Τὸ ἀπιστεῖν ταῖς ἐντολαῖς ἐκ τοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν ἐκλειῦσθαι τῶν ἐντολῶν γίνεται, &c.—Chrys. ad Demet. Opp. Tom. vi. Or. xii. p. 140.

Ὅστε εἰ μέλλομεν ἐρριζωμένην ἔχειν τὴν πίστιν, πολιτείας ἡμῖν δεῖ καθαρᾶς τῆς τοῦ πνεύματος πειθοῦς μένειν, καὶ συνέχειν ἐκείνης τὴν δύναμιν. οὐ γὰρ ἐστίν, οὐκ ἐστὶ βίον ἀκάθαρτον ἔχοντα, μὴ καὶ περὶ τὴν πίστιν σαλεύεσθαι. &c.—Id. Tom. v. Or. lv. [p. 374.]

SERM.  
I.

Vicious practice doth also weaken the judgment and stupify the faculties<sup>1</sup>; so that we cannot clearly apprehend, or judge soundly about spiritual matters.

The same also quencheth God's Spirit, and driveth away his grace, which is requisite to the production and preservation of faith in us.

14 In fine, from what spirit infidelity doth proceed we may see by the principles, commonly with it espoused, for its support and countenance, by its great masters and patrons; all which do rankly savour of baseness and ill-nature.

They do libel and revile mankind as void of all true goodness; from the worst qualities, of which they are conscious themselves or can observe in others, patching up an odious character of it; thus shrouding themselves under common blame from that which is due to their own wickedness; and dispensing with that charity and honesty, which is by God's law required from them toward their neighbour: and having so bad an opinion of all men, they consequently must bear ill-will toward them; it not being possible to love that which we do not esteem.

They allow nothing in man to be immaterial, or immortal; so turning him into a beast, or into a puppet, a whirligig of fate or chance.

They ascribe all actions and events to necessity,

<sup>1</sup> Ἡ πονηρία φθαρτικὴ τῶν ἀρχῶν.—Vid. Chrys. in Joh. Hom. v. Tom. II. p. 582. [Καὶ ἀπλῶς ἅπας ὁ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ποιῶν, τῶν μεθύοντων οὐδὲν διενήνοχε καὶ μαινομένων, πρὸς τὸ τῶν πραγμάτων μὴ ἐπιγνώσκειν τὴν φύσιν. καὶ καθάπερ ἐν νυκτὶ καὶ ξύλον, καὶ μόλιβδον, καὶ σίδηρον, καὶ ἄργυρον, καὶ χρυσόν, καὶ λίθον τίμον, πάντα ὁμοίως ὀρώμεν, τοῦ διακρίνοντος αὐτὰ φωτὸς οὐ παρόντος· οὕτω καὶ ὁ βίον ἀκάθαρτον ἔχων, οὐκ οἶδε τῆς σωφροσύνης τὴν ἀρετὴν, οὐ τῆς φιλοσοφίας τὸ κάλλος.]

or external impulse, so razing the grounds of justice and all virtue; that no man may seem responsible for what he doth, commendable or culpable, amiable or detestable. SERM.  
I.

They explode all natural difference of good and evil; deriding benignity, mercy, pity, gratitude, ingenuity, that is, all instances of good-nature, as childish and silly dispositions.

All the relics of God's image in man, which raise him above a beast, and distinguish him from a fiend, they scorn and expose to contempt.

They extol power as the most admirable, and disparage goodness as a pitiful thing; so preferring a devil before an angel.

They discard conscience, as a bugbear to fright children and fools; allowing men to compass their designs by violence, fraud, slander, any wrongful ways; so banishing all the securities (beside selfishness and slavish fear) of government, conversation, and commerce; so that nothing should hinder a man (if he can do it with advantage to himself and probable safety) to rebel against his prince, to betray his country, to abuse his friend, to cheat any man with whom he dealeth.

Such are the principles (not only avowed in common discourse, but taught and maintained in the writings) of our infidels; whereby the sources of it do appear to be a deplorable blindness, and desperate corruption of mind; an extinction of natural light, and extirpation of good-nature. Further,

III. The naughtiness of infidelity will appear by considering its effects and consequences; which are plainly a spawn of all vices and villanies, a



SERM.  
I.

deluge of all mischiefs and outrages upon the earth: for faith being removed, together with it all conscience goeth; no virtue can remain; all sobriety of mind, all justice in dealing, all security in conversation are packed away; nothing resteth to encourage men unto any good, or restrain them from any evil; all hopes of reward from God, all fears of punishment from him being discarded. No principle or rule of practice is left, beside brutish sensuality, fond self-love, private interest, in their highest pitch, without any bound or curb; which therefore will dispose men to do nothing but to prey on each other, with all cruel violence and base treachery. Every man thence will be a god to himself, a fiend to each other; so that necessarily the world will thence be turned into a hell, full of iniquity and impurity, of spite and rage, of misery and torment. It depriveth each man of all hope from Providence, all comfort and support in affliction, of all satisfaction in conscience; of all the good things which faith doth yield.

The consideration of which numberless and unspeakable mischiefs hath engaged statesmen in every commonwealth to support some kind of faith, as needful to the maintenance of public order, of traffic, of peace among men.

It would suffice to persuade an infidel, that hath a scrap of wit, (for his own interest, safety, and pleasure,) to cherish faith in others, and wish all men beside himself endued with it.

It in reason obligeth all men to detest atheistical supplanters of faith, as desperate enemies to mankind, enemies to government, destructive of common society; especially considering that of

all Religions that ever were, or can be, the Christian doth most conduce to the benefit of public society; enjoining all virtues useful to preserve it in a quiet and flourishing state, teaching loyalty under pain of damnation. SERM.  
I.

I pass by, that *Without faith no man can please God*; that infidelity doth expose men to his wrath and severest vengeance; that it depriveth of all joy and happiness; seeing infidels will not grant such effects to follow their sin, but will reject the supposition of them as precarious and fictitious. Heb. xi. 6.

To conclude therefore the point, it is, from what we have said, sufficiently manifest, that infidelity is a very sinful distemper, as being in its nature so bad, being the daughter of so bad causes, the sister of so bad adjuncts, the mother of so bad effects.

But this you will say is an improper subject: for is there any such thing as infidelity in Christendom? are we not all Christians, all believers, all baptized into the faith, and professors of it? do we not every day repeat the Creed, or at least say Amen thereto? do we not partake of the holy mysteries, sealing this profession? what do you take us for? for Pagans? this is a subject to be treated of in Turkey, or *in partibus infidelium*. This may be said: but if we consider better, we shall find ground more than enough for such discourse; and that infidelity hath a larger territory than we suppose: for (to pass over the swarms of atheistical apostates, which so openly abound, denying or questioning our Religion) many infidels do lurk under the mask of Christian profession. It is not the name of Christian, or the badges of our Religion, that make a Christian; no more than

**SERM.** a cowl doth make a monk, or the beard a philosopher: there may be a creed in the mouth, where there is no faith in the heart, and a cross impressed on the forehead of an infidel; *With the heart man believeth to righteousness; Shew me thy faith by thy works*, saith St James: if no works be shewed, no faith is to be granted; as where no fruit, there no root, or a dead root, which in effect and moral esteem is none at all.

**I.**  
**Rom. x.**  
**10.**  
**James ii.**  
**18.**

**Tit. i. 16.** Is he not an infidel, who denieth God? such a renegado is every one that liveth profanely, as St Paul telleth us. And have we not many such renegadoes? if not, what meaneth that monstrous dissoluteness of life, that horrid profaneness of discourse, that strange neglect of God's service, and violation of God's law? Where such luxury, such lewdness, such avarice, such uncharitableness, such universal carnality doth reign, can faith be there? can a man believe there is a God, and so affront him? can he believe that Christ reigneth in heaven, and so despise his laws? can a man believe a judgment to come, and so little regard his life; a heaven, and so little seek it; a hell, and so little shun it?—Faith therefore is not so rife, infidelity is more common than we may take it to be; every sin hath a spice of it, some sins smell rankly of it.

To it are attributed all the rebellions of the Israelites, which are the types of all Christian professors, who seem travellers in this earthly wilderness toward the heavenly Canaan; and to it all the enormities of sin and overflowings of iniquity may be ascribed.

I should proceed to urge the precept, that we take heed thereof; but the time will not allow me

to do it: let it therefore suffice to have declared SERM.  
I.  
its naughtiness, which alone may be a strong inducement to avoid it.

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The following paragraphs, introduced by Archbishop Tillotson into the text after the words, "But the time will not allow me to do it," with the addition, "I shall only suggest to your meditation the heads of things," form no part of the original sermon.

It is infidelity, that maketh men covetous, uncharitable, discontent, pusillanimous, impatient.

Because men believe not Providence, therefore they do so greedily scrape and hoard.

They do not believe any reward for charity, therefore they will part with nothing.

They do not hope for succour from God, therefore are they discontent and impatient.

They have nothing to raise their spirits, therefore are they abject.

Infidelity did cause the Devil's apostasy.

Infidelity did banish man from paradise, (trusting to the Devil, and distrusting God's word).

Infidelity (disregarding the warnings and threats of God) did bring the deluge on the world.

Infidelity did keep the Israelites from entering into Heb. iii.  
Canaan, the type of heaven; as the Apostle to the He-<sup>19;</sup>  
iv. 6, &c.  
brews doth insist.

Infidelity, indeed, is the root of all sin; for did men heartily believe the promises to obedience, and the threats to disobedience, they could hardly be so unreasonable as to forfeit the one, or incur the other: did they believe that the omnipotent, all-wise, most just and severe God, did command and require such a practice, they could hardly dare to omit or transgress.

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**I** Believe, &c.

## SERMON II.

### OF THE VIRTUE AND REASONABLENESS OF FAITH.

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2 PET. I. 1.

*To them that have obtained like precious faith with us.*

SERM.  
II.

**T**HE Holy Scripture commendeth faith\* (that is, a hearty and firm persuasion concerning the principal doctrines of our Religion, from Divine revelation taught by our Lord and his Apostles) as  
1 Pet. i. 7. a most precious and honourable practice; as a virtue of the first magnitude, very commendable  
Heb. xi. 6. in itself, very acceptable to God, very beneficial to  
John xvi. 27. us; having most excellent fruits growing from it, most noble privileges annexed to it, most ample rewards assigned for it.

It is in a special manner commanded, and obedience to that command is reckoned a prime instance of piety: *This is his commandment, That we should believe; This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*  
1 John iii. 23.  
John vi. 29.

Heb. xi. 6. It is the root of our spiritual life; for, *He that cometh to God must believe; and, Add to your faith virtue,* saith St Peter, supposing faith to precede other virtues.  
2 Pet. i. 5.

It is the principal conduit of Divine grace; for By it we are regenerated, and become the sons

\* "The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."  
Heb. XI-1

of God; *Ye all, saith St Paul, are the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* SERM.  
II.

By it we abide in God, and do possess him, Gal. iii. 26.  
John i. 12.  
1 John ii.  
saith St John.

By it *Christ dwelleth in us*, saith St Paul.

By it we obtain God's Spirit: *Did ye, saith St Paul, receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* 24.  
2 John 9.  
Eph. iii.  
17.  
Gal. iii. 2,  
14.  
Eph. i. 13.  
Acts ii. 38;  
v. 32.  
John vii.  
38.  
Rom. iii.  
25;  
v. 1;  
x. 10.  
Acts xxvi.  
18;

By it we are justified, or acquitted from guilt, and condemnation for sin: for, *Being justified by faith we have peace with God.*

By it our hearts are purged, saith St Paul; our souls are purified, saith St Peter.

By it we are freed from the dominion of sin; according to that of our Saviour; *If ye abide in my word,—ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.* x. 43.  
Acts xv. 9.  
1 Pet. i.  
22.  
John viii.  
31, 32.

It procureth freedom of access to God; *We have, saith St Paul, boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.* Eph. iii.  
12.  
Heb. x. 22.

It is the shield, whereby we resist temptations; and the weapon, whereby we overcome the world. Eph. vi. 16.  
1 Pet. v. 9.  
1 John v.

In fine, it is that, which being retained in a good conscience, and maintained by virtuous practice, doth keep us in a state of salvation, and will assuredly convey us into eternal life and felicity; for, *By grace we are saved, through faith.* 5.  
1 Tim. i.  
19; iii. 9;  
i. 5.  
Eph. ii. 8.  
Rom. x.  
10;  
viii. 24;  
i. 16.  
Heb. x. 34.  
1 Pet. i. 9.  
Luke viii.  
12.  
Acts xvi.  
30, 31.

That faith should be thus highly dignified, hath always appeared strange to the adversaries of our Religion<sup>a</sup>; and hath suggested to them matter of

<sup>a</sup> Πίστις δὲ ἢ διαβάλλουσι, κενὴν καὶ βάρβαρον νομίζοντες Ἕλληνες.

—Clem. Alex. Strom. ii. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 432.]

Pagani nobis objicere solent, quod Religio nostra, quia quasi rationibus deficit, in sola credendi persuasionem consistat.—Ruff. in Symb. [App. ad Cypr. Opp. Ed. Fell. p. 18.]

SERM.  
II.

Prov. xiv.  
15.

obloquy against it; they could not apprehend why we should be commanded, or how we can be obliged to believe; as if it were an arbitrary thing, depending on our free choice, and not rather did naturally follow the representation of objects to our mind: they would not allow that an act of our understanding, hardly voluntary, as being extorted by force of arguments, should deserve such reputation and such recompenses<sup>b</sup>; for if, argued they, a doctrine be propounded with evident and cogent reason, what virtue is there in believing it, seeing a man in that case cannot avoid believing, is therein merely passive, and by irresistible force subdued? If it be propounded without such reason, what fault can it be to refuse assent, or to suspend his opinion about it? can a wise man then do otherwise? is it not in such a case simplicity, or fond credulity, to yield assent? yea, is it not deceit or hypocrisy to pretend the doing so? may not justly then all the blame be charged rather on the incredibility of the doctrine, or the infirmity of reasons enforcing it, than on the incredulity of the person who doth not admit it? whence no philosophers ever did impose such a precept, or did assign to faith a place among the virtues.

To clear this matter, and to vindicate our Religion from such misprisions, and that we may be engaged to prize and cherish it; I shall endeavour to declare, that Christian faith doth worthily deserve all the commendations and the advantages granted thereto: this I shall do by considering its

<sup>b</sup> Ἀδίκημα καὶ δικαιοπράγημα ὄρισται τῷ ἑκουσίῳ καὶ ἀκουσίῳ.—  
Arist. Eth. v. 8. [2.] Cf. iii. 1.

nature and ingredients; its rise and causes; its efficacy and consequences. SERM.  
II.

I. As to its nature; it doth involve knowledge<sup>c</sup>, knowledge of most worthy and important truths, knowledge peculiar and not otherwise attainable, knowledge in way of great evidence and assurance.

I Truth is the natural food of our soul, toward which it hath a greedy appetite<sup>d</sup>, which it tasteth with delicious complacency, which being taken in and digested by it doth render it lusty, plump, and active: truth is the special ornament of our mind, decking it with a graceful and pleasant lustre; truth is the proper wealth of reason, whereof having acquired a good stock, it appeareth rich, prosperous, and mighty: what light is without, that is truth within, shining on our inward world, illustrating, quickening, and comforting all things there, exciting all our faculties to action, and guiding them in it. All knowledge therefore, which is the possession of truth, is much esteemed; even that which respecteth objects mean, and little concerning us, (such as human sciences are conversant about; natural appearances, historical events, the properties, proportions, and powers of figure, of motion, of corporeal force,) doth bear a good price, as perfective of rational nature, enriching, adorning, invigorating our mind; whence Aristotle doubteth not, upon all those habitual endowments, which so accomplish our understanding, to bestow the name of virtues; that with him being the virtue of each

Pa. cxix.

142, 151.

John i. 7;

iii. 19.

Pa. cxix.

105.

<sup>c</sup> Πίστις τῆς εἰς τὸν Θεὸν γνώσεως παρασκευαστικῇ.—Chrys. Opp. Tom. v. Or. LV. [p. 871.]

<sup>d</sup> Ἀλήθεια δὴ πάντων μὲν ἀγαθῶν θεοῖς ἡγείται, πάντων δὲ ἀνθρώποις. —Plat. de Leg. v. [730 B.] Cf. de Rep. vi. [490 A. Ἠγεῖτο δ' αὐτῷ . . . πρῶτον μὲν ἀλήθεια, ἣν διώκειν αὐτὸν πάντως καὶ πάντῃ ἴδει.]



SERM. II. thing, which anywise perfecteth it, and disposeth it for action suitable to its nature<sup>o</sup>. And if ignorance, error, doubt, are defects, deformities, infirmities of our soul, then the knowledge which removeth them doth imply the perfection, beauty, and vigour thereof. Faith therefore, as implying knowledge, is valuable.

2 But it is much more so, in regard to the quality of its objects, which are the most worthy that can be, and most useful for us to know; the knowledge whereof doth indeed advance our soul into a better state, doth ennoble, enrich, and embellish our nature; doth raise us to a nearer resemblance with God, and participation of his wisdom; doth infuse purest delight and satisfaction into our hearts; doth qualify and direct us unto practice most conducive to our welfare; it is a knowledge, enlightening the eyes, converting the soul, rejoicing the heart; sweeter than honey, and the honeycomb; more precious than rubies; which giveth to our head an ornament of grace, and a crown of glory. For,

Ps. xix. 7,  
8, 9, 10;  
cxix. 103,  
111.  
Prov. iii.  
15;  
iv. 9.

Thereby we understand the nature, or the principal attributes of God, of whom only the Christian doctrine doth afford a completely true and worthy character, directive of our esteem, our worship, our obedience, our imitation of him; whereby our demeanour toward him may become him, and please him.

By it we are fully acquainted with the will and intentions of God, relating both to our duty and our recompense; what he requireth from us, and

<sup>o</sup> Πᾶσα ἀρετὴ, οὗ ἂν ἡ ἀρετὴ, αὐτό τε εὖ ἔχον ἀποτελεῖ, καὶ τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ εὖ ἀποδίδωσι.—Arist. Eth. II. 6. [2.]

what he designeth for us; upon what terms he will proceed with us in way of grace, of mercy, of justice. SERM.  
II.

By it we are informed concerning ourselves, what our frame is, whence our original, to what ends we are designed, wherein our felicity doth consist, and how it is attainable.

It enableth us rightly to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong; what is worthy of us, and pleasing to God, what misbecoming us, and offensive to him; both absolutely and comparatively, according to the degrees of each case respectively.

It prescribeth us an exact rule of life, comprising all our duties toward God, our neighbour, ourselves; to observe which will be most decent, and exceedingly profitable to us.

It teacheth us from what principles, and upon what grounds we should act, that our practice should be truly good and laudable.

It proposeth the most valid inducements to virtue, tendering the favour of God and eternal bliss in reward thereof, menacing Divine wrath and endless woe upon its neglect.

It discovereth the special aids dispensed to us for the support of our weakness against all temptations and discouragements incident to us through the course of our life.

The knowledge of these things is plainly the top of all knowledge whereof we are capable; not consisting in barren notion, not gratifying idle curiosity, not serving trivial purposes, but really bettering our souls, producing most goodly and wholesome fruits, tending to ends most noble and

SERM.  
II.

worthy: this, indeed, is the highest philosophy; the true culture, and medicine of our soul; the true guide of life, and mistress of action; the mother of all virtues; the best invention of God, and rarest gift of heaven to men<sup>f</sup>: for these commendations, by Pagan Sages ascribed to their philosophy, do in truth solely belong to that knowledge, which by faith we do possess: their philosophy could not reach such truths; it could not so much as aim at some of them; it did but weakly attempt at any: it did, indeed, pretend to the knowledge of Divine and human things, (this being its definition, current among them<sup>g</sup>;) but it had no competent means of attaining either, in any considerable measure<sup>h</sup>; for Divine things (the nature of him who dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto; the intentions of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his will; the ways of him, which are more discosted from our ways, than heaven from earth; the depths of God, which none but his own Spirit can search out, or discover) do lie beyond the sphere of natural light, and inquisition of our reason: and as for human things, the chief of them have such a connexion with Divine things, that who were ignorant of the one could nowise descry the other; wherefore those candidates of knowledge, notwithstanding their

<sup>f</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 16.

Eph. i. 11.

Isai. lv. 9.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

<sup>f</sup> *Cultura animi philosophia est.*—Cic. Tusc. Quæst. [II. 5. 13.] *Medicina animi.*—Id. [ibid. III. 3. 6.] *O vitæ philosophia dux!*—Id. ibid. [v. 2. 5.] *Nec ullum arbitror, ut apud Platonem est, majus aut melius a diis datum munus homini.*—Id. Acad. I. [2. 7.] *Vid. Tusc. Quæst. I. [26. 64.]*

<sup>g</sup> *Omnis optimarum rerum cognitio, atque in iis exercitatio, philosophia nominatur.*—Id. de Orat. III. [16. 60.]

<sup>h</sup> *Οὐκ ἐχέγγυοι διδάσκαλοι περὶ Θεοῦ λέγοντες ἄνθρωποι, καὶ ἄνθρωποι &c.*—Clem. Alex. Strom. VI. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 826.]

lofty pretences, were fain to rest in a low form, SERM. II.  
 employing their studies on inferior things, the  
 obscurity of nature, the subtlety of discourse, and  
 moral precepts of life<sup>1</sup>; such precepts, as their  
 glimmering light and common experience did sug-  
 gest; for even in points of common morality and  
 prudence human wit can but fumble, as by the  
 great clashing and jangling about them is very  
 notorious.

3 Faith also hath this excellent advantage,  
 that it endueth us with such knowledge in a very  
 clear and sure way, comparable to that whereby  
 the theorems of any science are known; it not  
 being grounded on any slippery deduction of rea-  
 son, nor on slender conjectures of fancy, nor on  
 musty traditions or popular rumours; but upon  
the infallible testimony of God, conveyed unto us  
 by powerful evidence, striking all capacities, apt  
 with equal influence to enlighten the simple and  
 to convince the wise. For want of this all human  
 wisdom was so blind and lame; so various, so un-  
 certain; nothing but confusion, unsettlement, and  
 dissatisfaction arising from mere ratiocination;  
 which being destitute of light and aid from hea- Acts xvii.  
 ven, doth ever grope in the dark, doth rove after 27, 30.  
 shadows of truth, is bewildered in mazes of in-  
 tricacy, wherein things lie involved; whence all  
 philosophy did consist in faint guesses, plausible  
 discourses, and endless disputes about matters of  
 highest consequence, such as the original of the  
 world, the administration of human things, the

<sup>1</sup> Philosophia in tres partes distributa est; in naturæ obscurita-  
 tem, in disserendi subtilitatem, in vitam atque mores.—Cic. de  
 Or. I. [15. 68.]

SERM.  
II.

nature and subsistence of our soul, the way to happiness; none being able about such points to conclude with resolution, or to assert with confidence<sup>k</sup>; so that in effect all the philosophers might be ranged under one great sect of sceptics, or seekers, the most advised and best disposed among them, in result of their most diligent speculations, appearing very doubtful<sup>l</sup>.

2 Pet. i.  
19.

But *We have*, as St Peter saith, *βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον, a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well to give heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place*, guiding us in the obscurities and uncertainties of life; *We have a hope, as an anchor of the soul both sure and stable*; which stayeth and setteth our mind, being tossed with winds and waves of uncertain cogitations<sup>m</sup>, suggested by different appearances of things.

Heb. vi.  
19.

Hence, as St Chrysostom is wont to insist, by virtue of faith rustic and mechanic idiots do in true knowledge surpass the most refined wits, and children prove wiser than old philosophers: an

<sup>k</sup> Ὁ μὴ ἐκ πίστεως βοηθούμενος, ἀλλ' οἰκοθεν ἐπὶ τὸν λόγον ἐρχόμενος, ταῖς ἀνθρωπίναις παρασκευαῖς πρὸς τὴν κατάληψιν τῆς ἀληθείας θαρρῶν, ψεύστης ἐστὶ, παραπολὺ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐκπίπτων.—Bas. in Pa. cxv. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 372 E.]

<sup>l</sup> Ὅπως δὲ ἢ ἀνευ πίστεως ἐπὶ τὸ λαλεῖν ἐρχομένη ψυχὴ διακενῆς ληρήσει.—Ibid.

Hanc enim perfectam philosophiam semper judicavi, quæ de maximis quæstionibus copiose posset ornateque dicere.—Cic. Tusc. [i. 4. 7.]

Vid. in M. Ant. Comm. p. 143. [ed. Gatak.]—Chrys. in Joh. Hom. LXXIII. Opp. Tom. II. [p. 823.]

<sup>m</sup> Οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτω ποιεῖ σκοτόδιον, ὥς ἀνθρώπων λογισμὸς, ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς πάντα φθεγγόμενος καὶ μὴ ἀνεχόμενος φωτίζεσθαι ἀνωθεν. &c.—Chrys. in Joh. Hom. XXIV. [Tom. II. p. 653.]

<sup>n</sup> Τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν ἡμετέραν σεσαλευμένην, καὶ περιφερομένην ὑπὸ τῶν λογισμῶν ἀσθενείας, &c.—Id. Tom. V. Orat. LV. [p. 369.]

idiot can tell us that, which a learned infidel doth not know; a child can assure us that, wherein a deep philosopher is not resolved<sup>n</sup>: For ask a boor, ask a boy educated in our Religion, who made him, he will tell you, God Almighty; which is more than Aristotle or Democritus would have told: demand of him why he was made, he will answer you, to serve and glorify his Maker; and hardly would Pythagoras or Plato have replied so wisely: examine him concerning his soul, he will aver, that it is immortal, that it shall undergo a judgment after this life, that accordingly it shall abide in a state of bliss or misery everlasting; about which points neither Socrates nor Seneca could assure any thing: inquire of him how things are upheld, how governed and ordered, he presently will reply, by the powerful hand and wise providence of God; whereas among philosophers one would ascribe all events to the current of fate, another to the tides of fortune; one to blind influences of stars, another to a confused jumble of atoms<sup>o</sup>: pose him about the main points of morality and duty; and he will in few words better inform you than Cicero, or Epictetus, or Aristotle, or Plutarch, in their large tracts and voluminous discourses about matters of that nature.

<sup>n</sup> Τίς οὐκ ἀν αὐτόθεν μάθοι τὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν, ἢ τοὺς ἀγραμμάτους καὶ ἰδιώτας τῶν μέγα ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ κομπαζόντων τοσούτῃ σοφωτέρους ἀπέδειξεν, ὅσῳ τῶν μικρῶν παιδίων τοὺς ἐμφρονας ἄνδρας ὑπερέχοντάς ἐστιν ἰδεῖν, &c.—Id. Ἀνδρ. ιθ'. [Tom. vi. p. 589.]

<sup>o</sup> Vid. Chrys. Tom. vi. Or. Lxi. p. 633. [Ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον εἰς μέσον προέθηκε, παναρμόνιον ὄργανον, φωνὰς πανταχόθεν ἀφίεντα, καὶ τὸν δημιουργὸν ἀνακηρύττοντα· καὶ ὅμως τινὲς τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰσιν, οἱ μὲν αὐτόματα πάντα λέγοντες, οἱ δὲ ἀγένηνητα τὰ ὁρώμενα, οἱ δὲ δαίμοσιν ἐπιγράφοντες τὴν τούτων δημιουργίαν καὶ πρό-  
νοιαν, ἄλλοι τύχῃ, καὶ εἰμαρμένῃ, καὶ γενέσει, καὶ ἄστρον περιφοραῖς.]

SERM.  
II.

Prov. i. 4.  
Ps. xix. 7;  
cxix. 9,  
100, 130.  
John xii.  
46;  
viii. 12.

2 Tim. iii.  
15, 16, 17.

Isai. xxxv.  
8.

So real a property it is of God's law, *To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion*; so true it is, that our Lord affirmeth of himself, *I came a light into the world, that he who believeth in me may not abide in darkness*; so justly doth St Paul affirm concerning Divine revelation, that *It is able to make a man wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*; being profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. This is that highway of holiness, of which the Prophet saith, *The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein*. Thus is faith in its nature honourable.

II. It hath also divers ingredients, or inseparable adjuncts, which it doth imply, rendering it commendable and acceptable to God. As,

I Faith implieth a good use of reason. This is that which commendeth any virtue, that a man acting after it, doth act wisely, in conformity to the frame and design of his nature, or like a rational creature<sup>P</sup>; using his best faculties in the best manner, and in their proper operations toward the end intended by the all-wise Creator: this is that, upon which all dispensation of justice is founded, a man being accountable for the use of his reason, so as to deserve reward for the right management, and punishment for the misuse thereof; this is that consequently, whereon God so often declareth himself to ground his judgment; so that in effect he will justify men for being wise, and condemn

Deut. iv. 6;  
xxxii. 29.  
Ps. cxi. 10.

<sup>P</sup> Πάν τὸ παρὰ τὸν λόγον τὸν ὀρθόν, τοῦτο ἀμάρτημά ἐστι. &c.—  
Clem. Alex. Pæd. i. 13. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 158.]

them as guilty of folly; whence in the holy style wisdom, and virtue or piety, are terms equivalent; and a fool doth signify the same with a vicious or impious person. And if ever a man deserveth commendation for well using his reason, it is then, when upon mature deliberation he doth embrace the Christian doctrine; for so doing is a most rational act, arguing the person to be sagacious, considerate, and judicious; one, who doth carefully inquire into things, doth seriously weigh the case, doth judge soundly about it.

It was a foul aspersion cast upon our Religion by its ancient opposers, that it did require ψιλήν καὶ ἄλογον πίστιν, a mere belief, void of reason<sup>a</sup>; challenging assent to its doctrines without any trial or proof. This suggestion, if true, were, I confess, a mighty prejudice against it, and no man, indeed, justly could be obliged to admit it upon such terms: but it is really a gross calumny; such a proceeding being disclaimed by the teachers and advocates of our Religion, being repugnant to the nature and tenor thereof; being prejudicial to its interest and design; being contrary to its use and practice<sup>r</sup>. Never any Religion was, indeed, so little liable to the censure of obtruding itself on men's credulity, none ever so freely exposed itself to a fair trial at

<sup>a</sup> Orig. con. Cels. [Lib. i. p. 9.]

Μὴ ἐξέταζε, ἀλλὰ πίστευσον.—[Ibid. p. 8.]

Πίστευσον, εἰ σωθῆναι θέλεις, ἢ ἅπιθι.—Ibid. Lib. vi. p. 282.

<sup>r</sup> 'Ο ταῦτα πιστεύσας, οὐχ ἀπλῶς, οὐδὲ ἀλόγως, ἀλλὰ κρίσει καὶ πληροφορίᾳ χάρισμα εἴληφεν ἐκ Θεοῦ.—Const. Apost. viii. 1. [Cotel. Pat. Apost. Tom. i. p. 388.]

Δέχεσθε, φησὶν, ἀπλῶς λεγόμενα, καὶ μηδεὶς ἐξεταζέτω τι πρῶτον ἐν αὐτοῖς, ἢ τι ἀπρεπές. καὶ πίστιν ὀνομάζει τὴν ἀβασάνιστον ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀσάτοις καὶ ἀναποδείκτοις ἐπὶ βλάβῃ συγκατάθεσιν.—Athan. de Arianis. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 581 B.]



SERM.  
II.

the bar of reason; none ever so earnestly invited men to scan and sift its pretences; yea, provoked them for its sake and their own, upon most important considerations, (at the peril of their souls, as they tendered their own best advantage,) to a fair, discreet, careful examination thereof<sup>a</sup>. Other Religions have for their justification insisted upon the examples of ancestors, custom and prescription of times, large extent and prevalence among crews of people, establishment by civil laws, and countenance of secular powers, (arguments extrinsical and of small validity in any case,) declining all other test and verdict of reason<sup>t</sup>: but our Religion confideth in itself, and the pure merit of its cause; and therefore warneth men, in a case of such moment, laying aside all prejudice, to employ their best understandings on an industrious and impartial search of the truth<sup>u</sup>; referring the decision and result, so far as concerneth each particular man, to the verdict of that reason and conscience, with which God, in order to such purposes, hath endued every person.

It, indeed, ordinarily doth refuse a sudden and precipitate assent, admitting no man, capable of judging and choosing for himself, to the participation of it, or to the name and privileges of a worthy believer, until after a competent time and opportunities of instruction, he can approve himself to understand it well, and doth avow himself to be cordially persuaded of its truth.

Such is its method, and it hath not any need of other; God having provided and exhibited arguments abundantly sufficient to convince any man of

<sup>a</sup> *Εἰργάμενον ἐξέτασις*.—Orig.

<sup>t</sup> Lact. Instit. II. 7.

<sup>u</sup> Lact. Instit. II. 8.

its truth, who is not affectedly blind and stupid, or wantonly slothful and careless, or frowardly stiff and obstinate. SERM.  
II.

What, indeed, better arguments (considering the nature of the objects which faith respecteth, being things spiritual and invisible; considering also the capacities of persons concerned, being all sorts of people, wise and simple, learned and rude) could we have, or could we need, than the conspicuous excellency and usefulness of the doctrine, approving itself to the mind, and confirming itself by palpable experience of most happy fruits, springing from a practice conformable thereto; than its exact correspondence to manifold ancient presignifications and predictions concerning it; than special attestations of God thereto, not only by audible voices, and visible apparitions from heaven, but also by innumerable miraculous works; than the concurrence of Divine Providence in strange methods to the propagation and maintenance of it; than the blessings and consolations, attending a faithful observance of it? What subtlety of discourse, what charm of eloquence could serve to evince and impress the great truths concerning the attributes, providence, will, commands, and promises of God<sup>x</sup>; concerning the immortal subsistence of our soul, the future judgment, the everlasting rewards hereafter, with such evidence and such force, to the common and vulgar reason, or, indeed, to any reason of man, as do these plain arguments, needing no

<sup>1</sup> Pet. i.  
10.

Heb. ii. 4.  
Acts iv. 33;  
xix. 20.

John vii.  
17.  
Acts v. 32.

<sup>x</sup> Τί ἀναγκαστικώτερον εἰς συγκατάθεσιν, εἰπέ μοι, προτάσεων πλοκαὶ τὸ συμπέρασμα ἀκόλουθον ταυταῖς ἐφελκόμεναι, ἡ θαῦμα τοσοῦτον ἐν-αργῶς δρώμενον, πᾶσαν ἀνθρώπου δύναμιν ὑπερβαῖνον;—Bas. in Ps. cxv. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 371 D.]

**SERM.** reach of wit or depth of judgment to sound their  
**II.** meaning, or feel their strength?

But if any man be too wise to be pleased with such downright and easy ways of conviction, reason itself, well followed, would lead him hither, and serve to produce faith in him: For that there is a God, reason from observation of appearances in nature and providence will collect; that goodness is one of his principal attributes, reason from the same grounds will infer; that God hath an especial regard to men will thence also become notorious; that consequently God will vouchsafe his guidance to men in their way toward happiness, will appear reasonable to conceive; that God hath not done this in any other way, reason, comparing and weighing things, will easily discern; that Christian doctrine may fairly pretend thereto, reason soon will admit; so hath reason led us to the door of faith, and being arrived thither, will (if our will be not averse) easily find entrance.

Hence God doth not only allow, but enjoin us to use our best reason in judging of this doctrine, whether it be from him, and worthy of our acceptance; he doth not bid us to retire into the dark, to shut our eyes, or to wink, when we receive it; but charge us to go into the clearest light; to open our eyes wide, to view it thoroughly with our best senses and sharpest attention, before we do yield our consent and approbation to it: his precepts are, that we examine all things, and hold fast that which is good; that we believe not every spirit, (or revelation pretended,) but try the spirits, whether they be of God; that we stand on our guard, and take heed that no man deceive us; that we be not

John iii.

21.

1 Pet. ii. 9.

Acts xxvi.

18.

1 Thess. v.

21.

1 John iv.

1.

Matt. xxiv.

4.

fools, nor children in understanding; but wise, and perfect men; that we compare things different, and try what is well-pleasing to God; that we be always ready with meekness and modesty to render unto every man demanding it an account of the hope in us.

He therefore doth expostulate with men for their dulness, their incogitancy, their sluggishness, their folly, as the causes of their unbelief; declaring that, in respect to such defaults wilfully incurred, he will proceed to condemn it; *He*, saith our Lord, *that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*; and, *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; If I had not come and spoken unto them—if I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin*. Our Lord, we see, did not urge his bare authority, or exact a faith without ground; but he claimeth it as due upon two most rational accounts; his convincing discourses, and his unparalleled works; which from any well advised and well disposed person could not but win belief, that he was a teacher sent from God.

Indeed, if we seriously do weigh the case, we shall find, that to require faith without reason is to demand an impossibility; for faith is an effect of persuasion, and persuasion is nothing else but the application of some reason to the mind, apt to draw forth its assent; no man therefore can believe he knoweth not what or why: he that truly believeth, must apprehend the proposition, and he must discern its connexion with some principle of truth, which as more notorious to him he before doth

SERM.  
II.

Eph. v. 6,  
15, 17.

1 Cor. xiv.  
20.

Eph. v. 10.  
Rom. xii.

2.

1 Cor. x.  
15.

Rom. i. 18.

Phil. i. 10.

1 Pet. iii.  
15.

Luke xxiv.

45.

John xii.

48;

x. 37;

xv. 22, 24.

John iii. 2;

vii. 46.

**SERM.** admit ; otherwise he doth only pretend to believe,  
**II.** out of some design, or from affection to some party ;  
 his faith is not so much really faith, as hypocrisy,  
 craft, fondness, or faction.

1 Tim. i.  
 15.

God therefore neither doth nor can enjoin us faith without reason ; but therefore doth require it, as matter of duty, from us, because he hath furnished sufficient reason to persuade us ; and having made his doctrine credible, (a faithful, or credible, word, and worthy of all acceptance ;) having given us reason chiefly to be employed in such matters, as he justly may claim our assent to, so he will take well our ready surrendry of it to him, as an act of reason and wisdom becoming us.

To yield unto reason fairly proposed and proved is in any case a laudable quality, signifying that a man hath his reason to purpose, that he is guided and governed thereby, not by humour or fancy ; qualifying him for conversation and business, for which nothing rendereth a man more unfit than humorous incredulity, or obstinacy against reason. It is especially commendable in these cases, concerning our better part and final state, arguing a man to be sober and advised, affording regard to things best deserving it, employing his consideration in due place, being faithful and just to himself, in attending to his main concerns.

2 Faith implieth a compliance with the providence and grace of God ; with his providence framing the economy of things to be believed, discovering it to the world by special revelation, furnishing motives apt to work faith, dispensing opportunities of knowledge leading thereto ; with his grace operating in our souls, by illustration of our minds

to discern, attraction of our wills to embrace, inclination of our affections to relish and like the heavenly truths exhibited to us. SERM.  
II.

There is no man to whom means are not administered, sufficient to produce in him that measure of faith, which is requisite toward the good management of his life, and his rendering an account for it at God's tribunal; there is no man also, to whom such means are afforded, whom the grace of God, *Who desireth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*, doth not in some degree excite to the due improvement of them; but in effect the case is varied, because some men do embrace those means, and comply with that grace, while others do reject or neglect them.

Our Lord saith, that, *Every one, who hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, doth come unto him*: but some there are, to whom the Father speaketh, yet they stop their ears, and refuse to hear; some do hear in a sort, but do not learn, ill prejudices or depraved affections barring instruction from their mind; being like those of whom the Apostle saith, *The Word heard did not profit them, being not mingled with faith in those which heard it*. John vi. 45.  
Job xxxiii. 16.  
Zech. vii. 11.  
Ezek. iii. 11.  
2 Tim. iv. 4.  
Acts vii. 57.  
Job xxxiii. 14;  
xxi. 14.  
Heb. iii. 7, 15; iv. 2.

*No man*, saith our Lord again, *can come unto me except the Father draw him*: but this attraction is not compulsory; we may hold back; we may withstand it, and not follow. John vi. 44; v. 40.  
Matt. xxii. 3.  
Luke xiii. 34.

*Faith*, saith St Paul, *is a gift of God*, and a favour granted to us; *ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη*, *To you*, saith he, *it hath been graciously vouchsafed not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him*; and, *To* Eph. ii. 8.  
Phil. i. 29.  
Eph. i. 17, 18.  
Matt. xiii. 11.

SERM. II. *you, saith our Lord, it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: but this gift is not always accepted, this favour is not always entertained; God doth not so obtrude it on us, but that we may reject or decline it.*

Gal. v. 22.  
Matt. xvi.  
17.  
1 Cor. xii.  
3, 9.  
1 John ii.  
20;  
iv. 2.

Faith is a fruit of God's Spirit; but such as will not grow in a bad soil, not purged from weeds of corrupt prejudice, of vicious affection, of worldly care; which will not thrive without good care and culture.

2 Cor. iv.  
13;  
v. 20.

God inviteth us to believe by the promulgation of his Gospel, and exhortation of his ministers; he declareth abundant reason to persuade us; he representeth to our minds the beauty of Christian truth and virtue; he speaketh from without unto us by manifold arguments, able, if we are not very stupid, to convince us; he speaketh within by strong impressions on our consciences, apt, if we are not very stubborn, to subdue us; *Behold, saith he, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man will hear my voice, and will open the door, I will come in unto him:* such is the case; God standeth at the door of our heart by the ministry of his word, he knocketh at it by the impulse of his grace; but to hear is the work of our vigilance, to open is an act of our voluntary compliance.

Rev. iii.  
20.

2 Cor. iv.  
6.  
Eph. i. 17,  
18.

God, saith St Paul, *who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;* God shineth upon us by revelation of his truth, God shineth into us by illumination of his Spirit; the which through the ear doth convey the light of truth unto the heart: but we may by wilful obstruction exclude that

light, shutting the windows of our heart against SERM. II. it; we may there quench it by foul affections, we \_\_\_\_\_ may smother it in fogs of evil prejudice; we may 2 Cor. iii. dissipate it by troublesome cares; we may, by 14; affected blindness, or drowsy negligence, render it indiscernible, or ineffectual to us; like those, of whom the Apostle there saith, that *The god of iv. 4. this world had blinded the minds of those which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

A man may *ἀπαθείσθαι τὸν λόγον*, thrust away Acts xiii. the word, as it is said of the Jews; he may, as 46; others of the same stamp did, resist the Spirit; vii. 51. he may, as those worldlings in the Gospel, let the Matt. xiii. seed fall beside him, or not fall deep into him, or 4. &c. fall into thorns, which may choke it; he may hate John iii. the light, and therefore not come unto it; or rebel 20; against it, as those did in Job; he may, as the i. 5. Pharisees did, defeat the counsels, and cross the Job xxiv. 13. desires of God. Luke vii. 30. Matt. xxiii. 37.

And as to deal thus with God's word and providence, thus to treat his Spirit and grace, is heinously criminal, so to use them well is very acceptable to God's goodness: if we yield due regard to his providence, and an obsequious ear to his word; if we cheerfully do accept his gifts, and close with his overtures of mercy; if we concur with his motions, and further his gracious designs, he will take it kindly of us; as therein acting becomingly toward him, and gratifying him in that wherein he most delighteth, which is the procurement of our good.

3 Faith doth imply good opinion of God, and good actions toward him.



SERM.  
II.

God our parent hath stamped on our nature some lineaments of himself, whereby we resemble him; he hath implanted in our soul some roots of piety toward him; into our frame he hath inserted some propensions to acknowledge him, and to affect him<sup>7</sup>; the which are excited and improved by observing the manifest footsteps of Divine power, wisdom, and goodness, which occur in the works of nature and providence; to preserve and cherish these is very commendable; a man thereby keeping the precious relics of the Divine image from utter defacement, retaining somewhat of his primitive worth and integrity; declaring that by ill usage he hath not quite shattered or spoiled his best faculties and inclinations.

Now that he who believeth hath thus managed himself, so as to have preserved in his soul those seeds of piety, apt to conspire with the influences of grace drawing to belief, doth appear from hence, that faith doth include an assent to divers points, so thwarting our carnal sense and gust, that without a good esteem of God, and good affection toward him, we hardly could admit them; *The carnal mind*, or brutish part within us, being, as St Paul saith, *enmity to God*, and *incapable of submission to his law*; *The sensual man being not able to receive the things of God, for they are foolishness to him*; to balance which repugnance and indisposition there must be some good notions and good affections in the mind, disposing it to comply with the revelation of truth, and operation of grace.

There can hardly be any greater instance of

Rom. viii.  
7.

1 Cor. ii.  
14.

<sup>7</sup> Φιλτρον φυσικὸν τὸ πρὸς τὸν κτίσαντα.—Orig. [con. Cels. Lib. iii. p. 135.]

respect and love toward any person, than a ready yielding of assent to his words, when he doth aver things to our conceit absurd or incredible; than resting on his promise, when he seemeth to offer things impossible, or strangely difficult; than embracing his advice, when he recommendeth things very cross to our interest, humour, and pleasure; whence Abraham's faith (expressed in hoping for a son in his decrepit age, and in offering up that son, who was so dear to him, who was the heir of promise, the prop of his family and hope) is so magnified, as an argument of exceeding respect and affection toward God: *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God*; it was a great evidence of his friendship, that, *Against hope he believed in hope, being fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able to perform*; and therefore *it was imputed to him for righteousness*; or accepted by God, as a signal act of goodness, whereby he did testify his immoveable opinion concerning the power, fidelity, and benignity of God, together with answerable good-will toward him.

SERM.  
II.

James ii.

23.

Rom. iv.

18, 21, 22.

Heb. xi.

19, 11.

And many things doth the Christian doctrine propose, apt to try such a friendship; many a hard saying doth it assert, which a profane mind can hardly swallow or digest; there is, indeed, scarce any article of faith, at which we shall not boggle; any matter of duty, which we shall not start at, any promise of God, whereat we shall not stagger, if we be not seasoned with favourable apprehensions and inclinations toward him, who recommendeth them to us, as endued with those attributes which secure their credibility.

John vi.

60.

SERM.  
II.  
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That God Almighty should erect this stately fabric of heaven and earth, decked with so rich and goodly furniture, with especial regard to man, so puny and mean a creature, whom he foresaw so ready to offend and wrong him; that upon his foul misdemeanour God should not withdraw his gracious protection and care from him, but thence should take occasion of designing and capacitating him for a state far more happy than that whence he had lapsed, making his punishment a benefit, and his deserved death a gate of immortality; that for the redemption of him, continuing in apostasy and rebellious enmity, God should please to send down out of his bosom, from the height of glory and blessedness, his own dearest Son, to partake the baseness and infirmity of our flesh, to endure the inconveniences and troubles incident to our condition, to undergo a most painful and ignominious death for the expiation of our offences; these are mysteries, to which we should not easily give credence, did we not conceive God immensely good and gracious.

That God could not pitch on more compendious and commodious ways of expressing his goodness and mercy\*, we hardly should admit, if we did not take him to be transcendently wise, far beyond our reach and comprehension.

That Jesus, a man in appearance like to ourselves; of mean parentage, of poor estate, who lived as a beggar and a vagrant, who died as a malefactor and a slave, in semblance forlorn to God and man, should be the Lord of life and glory, the general Author of salvation, the Judge

\* 'Ο ἀνεξίχνιαστος πλούτος τοῦ Χριστοῦ.—Eph. iii. 8.

of all men, the King of all the world, is a point SERM.  
II. which cannot but appear very strange, very scandalous to minds not imbued with special reverence of the Divine power and wisdom.

That God, who is so perfectly holy, so exactly just, so extremely displeased with iniquity, should yet bear so patiently, and so easily pardon enormous transgressions against himself; that he should accept so mean services, and to so slight performances should dispense so precious rewards, who would believe, that is not possessed with conceptions of his admirable clemency and bounty?

That God one day will raise the dead, re-collecting our scattered dust, and rearing our dissolved frame, we should not easily grant, had we not a strong opinion of God's power, and that nothing is Jer. xxxii.  
17. too hard for him to accomplish.

That to deny ourselves in all ways, to hate our Luke xiv.  
26; own souls, to take up a cross, to forsake kindred and friends, to quit houses and lands, to renounce all that we have, to reject the profits, the honours, xviii. 22. the delights of the world, to cut off our right hands, to pluck out our right eyes, to mortify our members, and crucify our flesh, to be dead to the world, to expose our lives unto greatest dangers, yea, to sacrifice them unto certain loss, are often things very good, most advisable and eligible, how could we be ever induced to conceive, if we did not take God to be most wise, who hath prescribed such duties; most faithful, who hath engaged to satisfy us for the discharge of them; most able fully to requite us for the pains and damages which we sustain in such practice?

That the methods of Providence should be so

SERM.  
II.

intricate and unaccountable; that the passage to happiness should be so rough, and that to misery so smooth; that he who disposeth all things, should to those whom he most liketh and loveth dispense temptations, crosses, disgraces, all kinds of hardship and sorrow; permitting those whom he disapproveth and detesteth to live without interruption in quiet, splendour, and jollity; would stumble one who hath not entertained a general assurance concerning the wisdom and equity of God.

John iii.  
33.

Faith, therefore, in most of its chief parts, doth imply him that owneth it, to be well conceited and well affected toward his Maker; thereby avowing his most glorious perfections, the which do assure the truth of his word and doctrine; *He*, saith our Lord, *that hath received my testimony hath set his seal that God is true*; that is, most evidently he doth signify his opinion of God's veracity and fidelity, together with the Divine perfections requisite to make them good; for be (saith the believer in his mind) the proposition never so uncouth to my apprehension, yet God is true who affirmeth it; be the duty never so harsh to my sense, yet God is wise and good who appointeth it; be the promise never so unlikely in appearance to find effect, yet God is faithful and able to perform it: and he that is thus disposed in judgment and affection toward God, no wonder if his demeanour be very acceptable to him.

Thus is faith precious, considering its nature, and those essential ingredients, or inseparable adjuncts, which it doth include or imply. It will also appear to be so, if we consider its rise, and those good dispositions, which concur in its production.

III. 1 To the engendering of faith there is required a mind sober, composed, and wakeful; ready to observe what befalleth, apt to embrace what is offered, conducive to our good and advantage; a mind not so drowned in worldly care, sensual enjoyment, or impertinent sport, as to oversee or neglect the concerns of our better part, and eternal state.

That we may believe, we must have eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a heart to understand; we must attentively look with our eyes, we must incline our ears to God's word, we must apply our heart to instruction.

Thus in the Apostolical history we may observe, that when the Apostles, in a manner apt to stir any man, being awake to remark, did propose their doctrine, some readily did yield their ears and hearts to their discourse; while others did not mind or regard it.

2 Faith doth require much diligence and industry. We must have the patience to give God the hearing, carefully attending to what is propounded; as it is said of Lydia, that *She did προσέχειν*, attend to the words spoken by St Paul; and, *δεῖ περισσοτέρως ἡμᾶς προσέχειν*, We must, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, *yield extraordinary attention to the things heard*; we must, as our Saviour warneth, let the evangelical word sink down into our ears: we must take the pains to consider the notions, and to weigh the reasons enforcing them; as the Bereans did, who did *ἀνακρίνειν τὰς γραφὰς*, examine the Scriptures, whether those things were so, as St Paul did teach out of them. We must *ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδὴν*, exert and demonstrate that

SERM.

II.

1 Thess. v. 6.

Deut.

xxix. 4.

Matt. xiii.

9;

xi. 15,

Rev. ii. 7.

Pa. lxxviii.

1.

Job xiii.

17.

Isai. xxxii.

3;

xxxv. 5.

Prov. xxiii.

12;

ii. 10;

iv. 1, 20;

vii. 24.

Acts xvi.

14.

Heb. ii. 1.

Luke ix.

44.

Acts xvii.

11.

Heb. vi.

11, 12.

SERM. II. *studious care*, which is requisite to get a clear knowledge and firm persuasion concerning the points of belief; for *He that received the seed into the good ground*, was ὁ τὸν λόγον ἀκούων καὶ συνιῶν, *he that heard the word, and did understand it*, or well consider it; God for this reason doth lay his truth not so open, or obvious, that we may be somewhat exercised, and put to use a pious diligence in finding it; it lieth under the surface, that we may delve for it; searching the Scriptures, weighing reasons, comparing things.

Matt. xiii.  
23.

John v. 39.

3 Faith must needs proceed from sincerity, and soundness of judgment.

The assent, which upon contemplation and considering of things we do yield to them, is usually termed judgment; and it much resembleth that act, whose name it borroweth: for as he is a good judge, who after a full cognizance, and careful discussion of the case with its pleas, doth pronounce freely and fairly, being no way swayed either by his own inclination, or by temptation from without; who is not biassed by any previous affection or dislike, not drawn by favour, nor daunted by fear, not bribed by profit, not charmed by flattery, not dazzled by specious appearance, not gulled by crafty insinuations or by fine speech, not tired by solicitation or importunity, not seduced by precedents or custom; not perverted by any such means, which are indirect, impertinent, or extrinsical to the cause, so as to give a wrong sentence; so is he that assenteth to Christian truth: many considerations will exempt him from any suspicion of being anywise so corrupted.

For the Gospel cometh under trial in a guise

nowise plausible or advantageous to human conceit: its garb and circumstances are nowise taking<sup>a</sup>, or attractive of any favour to it; but such rather, as are apt to raise dislike and scandal against it; it being, as St Paul saith, presented up in earthen vessels, in a way very homely and contemptible. It representeth a mean, a poor, a persecuted, a crucified man offering salvation, and claiming obedience; attended by persons of like condition and fortune, urging the same overtures and pretences upon us: and what impression is such an appearance likely to work upon our fancy, which is prone to affect splendid and pompous shows?

The same doth not present to us any bribe of gain, doth not tempt us with any hope of preferment, doth not allure us with any bait of pleasure; but challengeth a free sentence; and that such an one, which may greatly prejudice our worldly interests, may spoil our profit, may stop our preferment, may dash all our pleasure; *In the world ye shall have tribulation: We must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of God: Every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* Such are the promises and enticements it useth.

Neither doth it soothe or court us by glozing speech, so as to recommend itself to our fancies by raising in us a good conceit of ourselves; but dealeth bluntly and coarsely with us; faithfully and plainly acquainting us with our own case, involved in its cause; how grievous sinners we be, how

SERM.  
II.

2 Cor. iv.  
Gal. iv. 13.

1 Cor. ii. 3.

John xvi.

33;  
xvii. 14.

Acts xiv.  
22.

1 Pet. ii.  
21.

2 Tim. iii.  
12.

1 Thess. iii.  
3.

Phil. i. 29.  
Eph. iii.

13.  
Matt. xvi.

24;  
x. 38.

<sup>a</sup> Μη κρίνετε κατ' ὄψιν.—John vii. 24.



SERM.  
II.  

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obnoxious to justice we stand; how worthless we are, how wretched we shall be, secluding that mercy and grace of God, which it tendereth upon its own terms, of confessing our guilt, disclaiming our merit, humbly seeking mercy, forsaking our own ways, and submitting to God's will.

It doth not solicit us in trim language, nor by sly insinuations doth inveigle us to embrace it; but in downright terms, in a plain dress of speech, in a resolute strain doth charge us, upon our peril, to do it right, denouncing upon our refusal extremities of wrath and vengeance.

It advanceth pleas against the bent of our temper, which ever is prone to things forbidden, and averse from things enjoined by it: against the prejudices of our mind, which is always apt to approve or to admire things which it condemneth or vilifieth; to dislike or despise things which it commendeth and magnifieth: against the affections of our heart, the dearest objects of whose love, delight, and care it would discard and drive from us; the most unwelcome and disgusting things whereto, it would introduce and bring to us: against our strongest appetites, and most earnest passions; the violent motions of which it doth curb and check; doth quell, or doth allay: against many temptations, potently drawing us to things from which it reclaimeth, stoutly driving us from things which it recommendeth: against the stream of habitual usage, and the torrent of common example, things so prevalent upon us: in fine, against ourselves, such as we naturally are, such as we by education and custom are made; whom it impeacheth of heinous guilt and enormous folly; whose conceit

and credit it debaseth; whom it depresseth into the confines of hell and misery: all within us, all about us, do with might and main oppose it; our lust, our fancy, our honour, our interest, our reputation, our principles, our customs, our friends, our enemies; the flesh, the world, the Devil, all combinedly are so many fierce adversaries, so many shrewd advocates, so many clamorous solicitors against its cause. SERM.  
II.

He therefore, who notwithstanding all these disadvantages determineth in favour of it, must assuredly be a very upright, impartial, and incorrupt judge; declaring his sense purely according to the dictates of his reason and conscience.

What, indeed, greater integrity can a man express, than in thus deciding a cause referred to him so much against himself, as he is naturally affected, and standeth related to things here? What greater equity can he shew, than in avowing so harsh, so rough, so displeasing truths, so little gratifying his own sense or fancy, so little favouring his profit or pleasure? What greater ingenuity can there be, than to espouse that doctrine which pincheth our liberty within so narrow bounds; which layeth such restraints upon our thoughts, our words, our actions; which interdicteth to us so many enjoyments, which exacteth from us so great pains?

4 To the begetting faith there must concur humility, or a readiness to entertain sober and moderate opinions of ourselves, together with suitable affections and desires; for he that with hearty persuasion and serious resolution embraceth Christianity, doth thereby stoop to many things very

SERM. cross to the vain conceit, the proud humour, and  
 II. haughty stomach of man.

The first step into the Christian state is a sight and sense of our own imperfection, weakness, baseness, and misery: we must discern and feel, that our mind is very blind, and our reason very feeble; that our will is very impotent, lame, depraved, prone to evil, and averse from good; that our life is void of merit, and polluted with guilt; that our condition is deplorably sad and wretched; that of  
 2 Cor. iii. ourselves we are insufficient to think or do any  
 5. good, in order to our recovery or deliverance; whence we are obliged to sore compunction of spirit for our deeds and our case, to humble confession of our sins and miseries, to earnest supplication for mercy and grace to heal and rescue us  
 Luke xviii. from our sad estate: *Lord, have mercy on me, a  
 13. sinner: What shall I do to be saved? Wretched  
 Acts xvi. man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body  
 30. of death?* Such are the ejaculations of a soul  
 Rom. vii. teeming with faith.  
 24.

He that entereth into the faith, must therewith entirely submit his understanding, and resign his judgment to God, as his master and guide<sup>b</sup>; being ready to believe whatever God declareth, however to his seeming unintelligible or incredible; to follow  
 Heb. xi. 8. whither God conducteth, although like Abraham he knoweth not whither he goeth; to approve that which God ordaineth, however distasteful to his sense; to undertake that which God requireth, however difficult; to bear that which God imposeth, how burdensome soever; being content that Divine

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Greg. Naz. Orat. xxvi. Opp. Tom. i. p. 464. [Ed. Paris. 1630.]

wisdom shall absolutely sway and reign over his wisdom; that his reason shall be puzzled, shall be SERM.  
II.  
baffled in many cases; that his mind shall be rified of all its prejudices, its fond curiosities, its presumptuous confidences, of every thought and device 2 Cor. x. 5.  
advancing itself against Divine truth.

He must abandon all good opinion of himself, all conceitedness of his own worth, merit, excellency, felicity in any kind; slighting his wealth, his power, his dignity, his wit, his wisdom, and the like advantages natural or secular, which are so much prized in vulgar and worldly esteem; as things in themselves of no consideration, nor otherwise valuable than as talents intrusted by God, or instruments of his service; disowning them from himself, as things freely dispensed by God, and absolutely depending on his disposal: saying with St Paul, *Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss* Phil. iii. 8,  
*for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus* <sup>9.</sup>  
*my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.*

He also that cordially doth embrace the Christian doctrine, with resolution of conforming his practice thereto, must look for it to sustain much disgrace; to be hated, to be censured and taxed, to be slighted and scorned, to be reproached, to be spurned as a fool, an idiot, a humourist, a silly, John xv.  
18, 19.  
superstitious, fantastical, morose body, by the world, and the adherents to its corrupt principles, its vicious fashions, its depraved sentiments and practices; who will wonder (with indignation and 1 Pet. iv. 4.

SERM. II. scorn) at those who do not run into the same excess of riot, speaking evil and railing at them; especially in times when wickedness doth lift up its horn, when profaneness doth not only much prevail, but doth insult and vapour over piety.

Ps. lxxv.

4.

Every Christian as such immediately doth admit notions quite debasing high conceit, which ascribe all our good things purely to Divine bounty, which allow us to own nothing but evils springing from our defects, infirmities, and corruptions, from our guilty naughtiness and folly; which display our great imperfection, indigency, impotency, ignorance, error, unworthiness, and forlorn wretchedness; which assure, that we do subsist in total dependence upon God, continually needing his protection, succour, and mercy.

He must undertake the practice of duties extremely cross to proud humour; to comport with injuries and affronts, without revenge, without resentment of them; to place himself beneath others; to be content with his state, how mean and poor soever; to bear patiently all events incident to him, however sad and grievous; with the like, contrary to the gust of a proud heart.

He that doth thus demean himself, embracing such notions, and complying with such duties, how can he otherwise than be a very humble, sober, and modest person?

5 To faith much fortitude, much resolution, and courage must conspire: for he that firmly persuadeth himself to be a Christian, doth embark in a most difficult and dreadful warfare, doth undertake most high and hazardous enterprises, doth engage in the boldest adventures that a man can

set upon; he intendeth to encounter most puissant, stout, and fierce enemies; to fight many a bloody battle; to attack many a strong hold, to sustain many a sharp brunt, to endure many sore hardships, to run into many terrible dangers, to break through many tough difficulties, to surmount many great discouragements, impediments, and oppositions. SERM.  
II.

He doth set himself in array against the world, the flesh, and the Devil, that strong confederacy bandied against him with their utmost force of strength and subtlety. 1 John v.

He must combat the world, by its fair looks, flatteries, and caresses, enticing to sin; by its frowns, menaces, and rough treatments, deterring from duty; ensnaring us by its profits, its glories, its pleasures; seducing us by its bad customs and examples; distracting us with its cares and amusements of business. Eph. ii. 2;  
iv. 22.  
Rom. xii.  
2.  
1 Cor. vii.  
31.  
2 Pet. i. 4.

He must cope with the flesh, that intestine and treacherous foe; which with its corrupt prejudices and imaginations, with its stubborn proclivities, with its impetuous appetites, with its boisterous passions, doth war against our soul, striving to bring our minds into captivity under the law of sin, which is in our members. 1 Pet. ii.  
11.  
Rom. vii.  
23.

He must grapple with the Devil, that strong one, that greedy lion, that wily snake, that rueful dragon, always waiting to surprise us, always gaping to devour us, always laying close trains to entrap us, always throwing fiery darts of temptation to consume or scorch us; *Our wrestling*, as the Apostle doth express it, *is against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the* Eph. vi.  
12.  
Luke xi.  
21.  
1 Pet. v. 8,  
9.  
Eph. vi.  
11, 16.  
2 Cor. ii.  
11.  
Eph. vi.  
12.

**SERM.** *darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness*  
**II.** *in high places.*

In these conflicts he must expect to meet with many a grievous repulse, to bear many a hard knock, to feel many a sore wound; to be often beat back, often knocked down, often thrust through, often trampled on, and insulted over.

To set on these things is surely the highest gallantry that can be; he that hath the heart to attempt and undergo such things, is a daring and brave man indeed; he that successfully can achieve such exploits is truly a hero; most deserving notable trophies, and everlasting monuments of renown.

The undertakings of Alexander, of Hannibal, of Cæsar, did not signify valour like to this; their achievements were but toys in comparison to these: those famous gallants would have found it infinitely harder to conquer the world in this way; to have subdued their lusts, and mastered their passions, would have proved far more difficult, than to get advantage in scuffles with armed men; to discomfit legions of devils, would have been to them another kind of work, than was the vanquishing squadrons of Persians, of Gauls, of Romans: to have set upon their own ambition and vanity, their intemperance, their revenge; to have quelled those inward enemies; to have sustained affronts, disgraces, afflictions, with a calm and contented mind, would have more tried their courage, than all which they attempted; making a great show, but signifying little of true fortitude.

6 The noble virtue of patience is likewise accessory to faith; thereto all kinds of patience must

concur; patience of labour in God's service, and SERM. II.  
 obedience to all his commands; *Patience of hope*, 1 Thess. i. 3.  
 in waiting for the accomplishment of God's pleasure; patience of persecution for God's sake, and  
 in conscience of our duty to him; patience of  
 crosses and afflictions by God's disposal allotted  
 to us for our instruction, our exercise, our proba-  
 tion, our correction, and improvement in goodness.  
 For,

Christianity is the great school and special Heb. v. 8;  
 academy of patience, wherein we are informed,  
 are inured, are trained up and tried to bear all  
 things: the cross is the badge of our profession,  
 without willingly carrying which, we cannot be the  
 children of God or disciples of Christ; whereby we  
 are conformed to the image of our Lord, the man xii. 6.  
 of sorrow, and acquainted with grief: tribulation Matt. xvi. 24.  
 is our lot, to which we are appointed, and to which Rom. viii. 29.  
 we are called; persecution is the condition pro- Isai. liii. 3.  
 posed to us; it being told us, that every one who 1 Thess. iii. 3.  
 will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer per- 1 Pet. ii. 21.  
 secution: affliction is the way toward happiness, 2 Tim. iii. 12.  
*For by many afflictions we must enter into the* Acts xiv. 22.  
*kingdom of heaven*; it is represented as a favour  
 granted to us to suffer; for, *ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη*, *To you*, Phil. i. 29.  
*saith St Paul, it hath been indulged, not only to* Eph. iii. 13.  
*believe in Christ, but to suffer for him*; it is our Matt. v. 11.  
 glory, our joy, our beatitude. Our work is to run James i. 2.  
 with patience the race that is set before us: in Rom. v. 3.  
 fine, faith and patience are the pair, which being James i. 12.  
 coupled together draw us to the inheritance of the 1 Pet. iv. 14; iii. 14.  
 promises; patience being needful to introduce and Heb. xii. 1; vi. 12.  
 support faith. Rev. xiii. 10.  
Heb. x. 36.  
Luke xxi. 19.

7 With faith also must concur the virtue of



SERM.  
II.

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prudence, in all its parts and instances: therein is exerted a sagacity, discerning things as they really are in themselves, not as they appear through the masks and disguises of fallacious semblance, whereby they would delude us; not suffering us to be abused by the gaudy shows, the false glosses, the tempting allurements of things; therein we must use discretion in prizing things rightly, according to their true nature and intrinsic worth; in choosing things really good, and rejecting things truly evil, however each kind may seem to our erroneous sense; therein we must have a good prospect, extending itself to the final consequences of things, so that looking over present contingencies we descry what certainly will befall us through the course of eternal ages.

In faith is exercised that prudence, which guideth and prompteth us to walk by the best rules, to act in the best manner, to apply the best means toward attainment of the best ends.

The prudence of faith is, indeed, the only prudence considerable; all other prudence regarding objects very low and ignoble, tending to designs very mean or base, having fruits very poor or vain. To be wise about affairs of this life (these fleeting, these empty, these deceitful shadows) is a sorry wisdom; to be wise in purveying for the flesh, is the wisdom of a beast, which is wise enough to prog for its sustenance; to be wise in gratifying fancy, is the wisdom of a child, who can easily entertain and please himself with trifles; to be wise in contriving mischief, or embroiling things, is the wisdom of a fiend, in which the old serpent, or grand politician of hell, doth exceed all the Machiavels in the

Rom. xiii.  
14.

world: *This, as St James saith, is earthly, sensual, devilish wisdom*; but the wisdom of faith, or that *Wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good works.*

SERM.  
II.

James iii.  
15, 17.

8 In fine, the embracing Christian doctrine doth suppose a mind imbued with all kinds of virtuous disposition in some good degree; for seeing that doctrine doth highly commend, and strictly prescribe all virtue<sup>o</sup>, he must needs be a friend to all virtue, and a devoted servant thereto, who can heartily approve and like it: his eye must be sound and clear from mists of bad prejudice, who can ken the beauty, and bear the lustre of it; his palate must be pure from vicious tinctures, who can relish its sweetness; his heart must be void of corrupt affections and desires, who sincerely doth affect it, and firmly doth cleave thereto; his conscience must be good, who can hope for the excellent rewards which it proposeth, who can stand proof against the terrible menaces it denounceth; his intentions must be upright, who dareth offer them to be scanned by so exact rules; his life must in good measure be blameless, who can present it before the bar of so rigorous judgment; he must be a man of much goodness, ingenuity, and integrity, who can think it expedient, who can be content and willing that such a doctrine be accounted true, which so plainly discountenanceth, which so peremptorily condemneth, which so severely punisheth all kinds of wickedness; for, *He, as our Saviour saith, and he alone, who doeth the truth, doth come to the light, that his deeds may be manifested.* Faith therefore, and

John iii.  
21.

1 Tim. i. 5,  
19; iii. 9.

<sup>o</sup> Vid. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. viii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 293.]

SERM. good conscience, are well by St Paul so often  
II. coupled, as inseparable associates.

Where now are they, who wonder that faith is so commended, doth find such acceptance with God, and is so crowned with reward; who would banish it from the company of virtues, and out of all moral consideration; who would have it taken for an involuntary act, forced on the mind, and issuing from dry speculation? for, seeing so many excellent dispositions of soul are its ingredients, essentially connected with it; seeing so many noble acts of will do concur to its production; seeing it hath so many choice virtues inseparably adherent, as previous or concomitant to it; it is no wonder that they should moralize it, should render it very considerable, so capable of praise, so worthy of recompense.

If we therefore do believe, because we will apply our minds to regard our best concerns, because we will yield due attention to the declarations and overtures of God, because we will take the pains to weigh the reasons persuasive of truth, because we look on things with an indifferent eye, and judge uprightly about them, because we have the courage, the patience, the prudence, the innocence, requisite for avowing such truths; then surely faith is voluntary, and therefore very commendable.

Whoever, indeed, will consider the nature of man, or will consult obvious experience, shall find, that in all practical matters, our will, or appetite, hath a mighty influence upon our judgment of things; causing men with great attention to regard that which they affect, and carefully to mark

all reasons making for it ; but averting from that which they dislike, and making them to overlook the arguments which persuade it ; whence men generally do suit their opinions to their inclinations ; warping to that side where their interest doth lie, or to which their complexion, their humour, their passions, their pleasure, their ease doth sway them ; so that almost any notion will seem true, which is profitable, which is safe, which is pleasant, or anywise grateful to them<sup>d</sup> ; that notion false, which in any such respect doth cross them : very few can abstract their minds from such considerations, or embrace pure truth, divested of them ; and those few, who do so, must therein most employ their will, by strong efforts of voluntary resolution and patience disengaging their minds from those clogs and biasses. This is particularly notorious in men's adherence to parties divided in opinion, which is so regulated by that sort of causes, that if you do mark what any man's temper is, and where his interest lieth, you may easily prognosticate on what side he will be, and with what degree of seriousness, of vigour, of zeal he will cleave thereto : a timorous man you may be almost sure will be on the safer side ; a covetous man will bend to that party, where gain is to be had ; an ambitious man will close with the opinion passing in court ; a careless man will comply with the fashion ; affection arising from education or prejudice will hold others stiff ; few do follow the results of impartial contemplation.

All faith therefore, even in common things, may be deemed voluntary, no less than intellectual ;

<sup>d</sup> Facile quæ credita prosunt credimus.

SERM.  
II.

and Christian faith is especially such, as requiring thereto more application of soul, managed by choice, than any other; whence the ancients, in their description of it, do usually include this condition, supposing it not to be a bare assent of the understanding, but a free consent of the will; *Faith*, saith Clemens Alexandrinus\*, is a spontaneous acceptance, and compliance with divine religion; and, *To be made at first was not in our power; but God persuadeth us to follow those things which he liketh, choosing by the rational faculties which he hath given us, and so leadeth us to faith; saith Justin the Martyr!*

The same is supposed in Holy Scripture; where Acts ii. 41; of believers it is said, that *They did ἀσμένως, gladly,*  
xvii. 11. *or willingly receive the word; and, They received it μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας, with all willingness, or readiness of mind.*

And to defect of will infidelity is often ascribed: John v. 40. *Ye will not come unto me, saith our Saviour, that*  
Luke xiii. *ye might have life: and, How often would I have*  
34. *gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! and,*  
Matt. xxii. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king,*  
3. *which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the*  
2 Pet. iii. 5. *wedding, and they would not come: and, Of this,*

\* Πίστις . . . . . πρόληψις ἐκούσιός ἐστι, θεοσεβείας συγκατάθεσις, &c.  
—Strom. II. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 432.]

Ἔβελοντῇ συνέπεσθαι τῷ συμφέροντι, συνέσεως ἀρχή.—Id. ibid.  
[p. 433.]

† Τὸ μὲν γὰρ τὴν ἀρχὴν γενέσθαι οὐχ ἡμέτερον ἦν. τὸ δὲ ἐξακολουθήσαι οἷς φίλον αὐτῷ αἰρουμένους δι' ὧν αὐτὸς ἐδωρήσατο λογικῶν δυνάμεων, πείθει τε καὶ εἰς πίστιν ἄγει ἡμᾶς.—Just. Mart. Apol. I. 10. [Opp. p. 49 c.]

saith St Peter of some profane infidels, *they are willingly ignorant, that by the word of God the heavens were of old*: and of the like St Paul saith, *that They received not the love of the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* SERM.  
II.  
2 Thess. ii.  
10, 12.

Indeed to prevent this exception, that faith is a forced act, and therefore not moral<sup>s</sup>; or to render it more voluntary and worthy, God hath not done all that he might have done to convince men, or to wring belief from them: he hath not stamped on his truth that glaring evidence, which might dazzle our minds; he doth not propose it armed with irresistible cogency; he hath not made the objects of faith conspicuous to sense, nor the propositions thereof demonstrable by reason, like theorems of geometry: this indeed would be to depose faith, to divest it of its excellency, and bereave it of its praise; this were to deprive us of that blessedness, which is adjudged to those, John xx. who believe and do not see; this would prostitute<sup>29</sup> wisdom to be deflowered by the foolish, and expose truth to be rifled by the profane; this would take from our reason its noblest exercise, and fairest occasion of improvement; this would confound persons fit to be distinguished, the sagacious and the stupid, the diligent and the slothful, the ingenuous and the froward, the sober and the vain, the pious and the profane; the children of wisdom, Matt. xi. which are apt to justify it, and the sons of folly, 19.  
Prov. i. 29; who hate knowledge; the friends of truth and v. 12.  
2 Thess. ii. virtue, and the lovers of falsehood and unrighteous- 10, 11, 12.ness.

<sup>s</sup> Ὁ δὲ ἀπιστος, ὃ φῶλον ψεύδος ἐκούσιον.—Plato apud Clem. Alex. Strom. ii. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 438.]

SERM.  
II.

God therefore hath exhibited his truth, shining through some mists of difficulty and doubt, that only those who have clear eyes, who do look attentively, who are willing to see, may discern it; that those who have eyes may see, and those who have ears may hear<sup>h</sup>. He meaneth this way of discovering his mind for a test to prove our ingenuity, for a field to exercise our industry, for an occasion to express his goodness in crowning the wisdom and virtue of good believers; that, *The trial of your faith, saith St Peter, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* He meaneth also thence to display his justice in punishing the slothful, the vain, the perverse, the profane; that, as the Apostle saith, *All men might be judged, who believed not the truth—but had pleasure in unrighteousness: hence, There must of necessity be scandals,* said our Saviour; hence our Lord was set for a *Mark to be contradicted, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed;* and, *There must be heresies,* saith St Paul; why? *that they which are approved* (οἱ δοκίμοι, persons that can bear the test) *may be manifested.*

God dealeth with us as he did with his ancient people. He, to assure them of his gracious protection and providence over them, or to persuade them of the truth of what he by Moses taught them, did before their eyes perform stupendous

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Chrys. in Joh. Hom. v. Opp. Tom. II. p. 581.

works in their behalf, affording them miraculous SERM. II.  
 deliverances from their enemies, and prodigious  
 supplies of their needs; the sight of which did  
 extort a temporary belief; *Then*, it is said, *they* Ps. cvi. 12.  
*believed his words, and sang his praise*; and when Exod. xiv.  
*Israel saw that great work which the Lord did* 31.  
*upon the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord,*  
*and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.* Yet Deut. viii.  
 withal God suffered divers things to fall out, to 2.  
 humble them, as it is said, and to prove them, and Ps. lxxviii.  
 to know what was in their heart, whether they 22, 32, 56,  
 would keep his commandments, or no: the result &c.;  
 of which dispensations was, that they being in- cvi. 24.  
 considerate, impatient, and refractory, believed not Neh. ix.  
 in God, and trusted not in his salvation; they 16.  
 despised that pleasant land, and gave no credence Deut. i. 32.  
 to his word: so God dealt with that typical people;  
 and in like manner doth he proceed with us: He  
 hath ministered signal attestations to the Gospel;  
 he hath dispensed arguments abundantly sufficient  
 to convince well disposed minds of its truth; but  
 he hath not cleared it from all scruples, which may  
 disturb the froward or the delicate; he hath not  
 exempted it from all scandals, which may disgust  
 the perverse and stubborn; he hath not prevented  
 all exceptions or cavils devisable by curious or  
 captious wits against it; he hath not guarded it  
 wholly from the malicious opposition of those,  
 whose interest it might seem, in favour of their  
 vices and follies, to impugn it; just it was, that to  
 such the Gospel should be *A stone of stumbling*, 1 Pet. ii.  
*and a rock of offence*; *who stumble at the word*, 7. 8.  
*being disobedient, unto which they were appointed,*  
 (that is, God having so purposely ordered the



SERM. II. evangelical dispensation, that such persons should not approve it, or comply with it;) just it was, that they should be debarred from a knowledge of that truth, which they should abuse, and detain in unrighteousness; just it was, that they should be punished with such temptations unto doubt and error, who would not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Rom. i. 18, 28.  
2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, 12.

Indeed, more abundant light of conviction, as it would deprive good men of much praise and reward, so it might be hurtful to many persons; who having affections indisposed to comply with truth, would outface and outbrave it, however clear and evident; *They would*, as Job speaketh, *rebel against the light*, although shining on them with a meridian splendour; they would plunge themselves into an inexcusable and incorrigible state of impiety, doing despite to the Spirit of grace, and involving themselves in the unpardonable sin; as we have many instances in the evangelical history of those, who beholding unquestionable evidences of Divine power attesting to our Lord's doctrine, which they could not but acknowledge, did yet oppose it, did blaspheme against it, did outrageously persecute it.

Job xxiv. 13.  
Heb. x. 29.  
Matt. xii. 31, 45;  
ix. 34;  
xii. 24.  
Luke xiii. 17.  
John xi. 47;  
xii. 37;  
ix. 28.  
Acts iv. 16.

Should God, as he once did in a dreadful manner, thunder out his laws, and shake the earth with his voice, yet many would little regard them; should God, in confirmation of his will, perform every day as many miracles, as he did once in Egypt, yet there would be Pharaohs, hardening their hearts against it; should God himself descend from heaven, as once he did, and converse with us, instructing us by discourse and practice, displaying

Heb. xii. 18, 26.  
Exod. ix. 34.  
John xii. 28.

among us conspicuous evidences of his power and goodness, yet who would believe his report, to whom would the arm of the Lord be revealed? how few cordially would embrace his doctrine, or submit to his law! As it was then, so it would be now; he would be hated, be scorned, be affronted, and abused, by persons qualified with like affections, as those were, who so then did serve him; for in all times like persons will do like things: as then only his sheep (that is, well disposed persons, like sheep, simple, harmless, and ductile) did hear his voice, and follow him; so others would not believe him, because they were not of his sheep, being imbued with swinish, currish, wolvisk dispositions, incapacitating them to follow his conduct: there would be persons like to those, of whom it is said, *Behold, ye scorers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.* SERM.  
II.  
Rom. x.  
16.  
John x. 27;  
x. 26.  
Acts xiii.  
41.

It is with instituted Religion as it is with natural; the works of nature are so many continual miracles of Divine power and wisdom; in the common track of Providence many wonderful things do occur; yet who by them is moved to acknowledge and adore God? notwithstanding them, how many Atheists and Epicureans are there! So will it be in regard to Divine revelations, which however clearly attested, will yet be questioned.

Those, indeed, whom sufficient reasons (such as God hath dispensed to us) will not convince, upon them the greatest motives would have small

SERM. II. efficacy<sup>i</sup>; so father Abraham told the rich man; *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

Luke xvi.

31.

John v. 47.

Matt.

xxvii. 42.

They may pretend, if they had more light, they would be persuaded; like those who said, *Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe*; but it would not in effect prove so, for they would yet be devising shifts, and forging exceptions; or, however, they would oppose an impudent face and an obstinate will against the truth.

Acts

xxviii. 27.

John xv.

22.

Wherefore it was for the common good, and to Divine wisdom it appeared sufficient, that upon the balance truth should much outweigh falsehood, if the scales were held in an even hand, and no prejudices were thrown in against it; that it should be conspicuous enough to eyes, which do not avert themselves from it, or wink on purpose, or be clouded with lust and passion; it was enough that infidelity is justly chargeable on men's wilful pravity; and that, *πρόφασιν οὐκ ἔχουσι*, *They have not*, as our Saviour saith, *any* reasonable excuse for it.

But so much for the causes and adjuncts of faith; the effects and consequences of it I reserve for another occasion.

<sup>i</sup> Γνώμης χρεία εὐγνώμονος· κἀν μὴ αὐτῇ παρῇ, σημείων οὐδὲν ὄφελος.  
— Chrys. in Matt. Hom. xliii. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 284.]

J Beliebe, &c.

## SERMON III.

OF THE VIRTUE AND REASONABLENESS OF  
FAITH.

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2 PET. I. 1.

*To them that have obtained like precious faith with us.*

OF all Christian virtues, as there is none more SERM.  
III.  
approved and dignified by God, so there is  
none less considered or valued by men, than  
faith; the adversaries of our Religion have always  
had a special pique at it; wondering that it  
should be commanded, as if it were an arbitrary  
thing, or in our choice to believe what we please;  
why it should be commended, as if it were praise-  
worthy to be subdued by reason; either by that  
which is too strong for us to resist, or by that  
which is too weak to conquer us.

But that faith worthily deserveth the praises  
and privileges assigned thereto, we may be satisfied,  
if we do well consider its nature and ingredients,  
its causes and rise, its effects and consequences.

In its nature it doth involve knowledge, or the  
possession of truth, which is the natural food, the  
proper wealth, the special ornament of our soul;  
knowledge of truths most worthy of us, and im-  
portant to us, as conversing about the highest

SERM.  
III. — objects, and conducing to the noblest use; knowledge peculiar, and not otherwise attainable, as lying without the sphere of our sense, and beyond the reach of our reason; knowledge conveyed to us with great evidence and assurance; the greatest, indeed, that can be, considering the nature of its objects, and the general capacities of men.

It implieth (that which giveth to every virtue its form and worth) a good use of our reason, in carefully weighing and uprightly judging about things of greatest concernment to us: it implieth a closing with God's providence dispensing opportunities, and representing motives serving to beget it; a compliance with God's grace attracting and inclining our souls to embrace his heavenly truth: it implieth also good opinions of God, and good affections toward him, which are requisite to the believing (upon his testimony, promise, or command) points very sublime, very difficult, very cross to our fancy and humour.

The causes also, which concur in its production, are very excellent; many virtuous dispositions of soul are requisite to the conception and birth of it: there must be a sober, composed, and wakeful mind, inquisitive after truth, apt to observe it starting, and ready to lay hold on it: there must be diligence and industry in attending to the proposals, and considering the enforcements of it: there must be sincerity and soundness of judgment, in avowing its cause, against the exceptions raised against it by prejudice and carnal conceit, by sensual appetites and passions, by temptation and worldly interest: there must be great humility, disposing us to a submission of our understanding,

and a resignation of our will unto God, in admitting notions which debase haughty conceit, in espousing duties which repress sturdy humour: there must be much resolution and courage, in undertaking things very difficult, hazardous, and painful; much patience, in adhering to a profession, which exacteth so much pain, and exposeth to so much trouble: there must be great prudence, in applying our choice (among so many competitions and pretences claiming it) to that which is only good; in seeing through fallacious disguises, and looking over present appearances, so as to descry the just worth, and the final consequence of things: there must, in fine, be a love of truth, and a liking of all virtue, which is so highly commended, and so strictly prescribed by the Christian doctrine.

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These particulars, commending faith to us, the time forbiddeth me to prosecute; I shall only therefore now insist upon the last head, concerning its effects, whereby (as the goodness of a tree is known by its fruits) the great excellency thereof will appear.

Its effects are of two sorts; one springing naturally from it, the other following it in way of recompense from Divine bounty: I shall only touch the first sort; because in this its virtue is most seen, as in the other its felicity.

Faith is naturally efficacious in producing many rare fruits; naturally, I say, not meaning to exclude supernatural grace, but supposing faith to be a fit instrument thereof; for, *God worketh in us to will and to do*, but in a way suitable to our nature, employing such means as properly serve to incline

Phil. ii. 13.

SERM.  
III.

Acts xi.  
24.

and excite us unto good practice; and such is faith, supported and wielded by his grace; for, indeed,

Even in common life faith is the compass by which men steer their practice, and the main spring of action, setting all the wheels of our activity on going; every man acteth with serious intention, and with vigour answerable to his persuasion of things, that they are worthy his pains, and attainable by his endeavours; what moveth the husbandman to employ so much care, toil, and expense in manuring his ground, in ploughing, in sowing, in weeding, in fencing it, but a persuasion that he shall reap a crop, which in benefit will answer all? what stirreth up the merchant to undertake tedious voyages over vast and dangerous seas, adventuring his stock, abandoning his ease, exposing his life to the waves, to rocks and shelves, to storms and hurricanes, to cruel pirates, to sweltry heats and piercing colds, but a persuasion, that wealth is a very desirable thing, and that hereby he may acquire it? what induceth a man to conform unto strictest rules of diet and abstinence, readily to swallow down the most unsavoury potions, patiently to endure cuttings and burnings, but a faith that he thereby shall recover or preserve health, that highly valuable good? From the same principle are all the carking, all the plodding, all the drudging, all the daring, all the scuffling in the world easily derivable. In like manner is faith the square and the source of our spiritual activity, disposing us seriously to undertake; earnestly, resolutely, industriously, and constantly to pursue the designs of virtue and piety, brooking the pains and hardships, breaking through the difficulties

and hazards, which occur in religious practice; engaging us to the performance of duty, deterring us from the commission of sin. SERM.  
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What but faith, eyeing the prize, will quicken us to run patiently the race that is set before us? what but faith, apprehending the crown, will animate us to fight stoutly the good fight? what but faith, assuring the wages, will support us in working all the day with unwearied industry and patience? what can raise pious hope, what can kindle holy desire, what can spur on conscientious endeavour, but a faith of attaining worthy recompenses for doing well? what can impress an effectual dislike and dread of offending, but a faith of incurring grievous punishment and sad mischiefs thence?

In reason a strong and steady belief but of one point or two, would suffice to engage us upon all duty, and to restrain us from all sin. Did we only believe the future judgment, with the results of it, that alone would be an effectual both spur and curb to us: for who believing, that his soul then shall be laid bare, that his inmost thoughts and secretest purposes shall be disclosed unto the view of all the world, will presume to harbour in his breast any foul thought or base design? who believing that he shall then be obliged to render an account of every idle word, will dare to utter villanous blasphemies, wicked curses, fond oaths, profane jests, vile slanders or detractions, harsh censures, or bitter reproaches? who being persuaded, that a rigorous amends will then be exacted from him for any wrong he doeth, will not be afraid with violence to oppress, or with fraud to circumvent his

Heb. xii. 1.  
Phil. iii.  
14.  
1 Cor. ix.  
24, 25.  
2 Tim. iv.  
7, 8.  
1 Tim. vi.  
12.

Matt. xii.  
36.



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III.

neighbour? who deeming himself accountable then for every talent and opportunity, will find in his heart to squander away or misemploy his time, his power, his wealth, his credit, his wit, his knowledge, his advantages in any kind of doing God service? who knowing himself obnoxious to a sudden trial, whereat his estate, his reputation, his life, all his interest and welfare must lie at stake, will contentedly loose his mind in wanton sports or wild frolics? In fine, if we are really persuaded, that presently after this short and transitory life, we shall openly, in the face of God, angels, and men, be arraigned at an impartial bar, where all our thoughts, our words, our actions shall most exactly be sifted and scanned; according to which cognizance a just doom shall be pronounced, and certainly executed upon us; how must this needs engage us to be very sober and serious, very circumspect and vigilant over our mind, our tongue, our dealings, our conversation, our whole life!

Again, if a man firmly believeth, that by a pious course of life, he shall gain the present favour and friendship of the Almighty, with all the real goods whereof he is capable; and that hereafter he shall be rewarded for it with an eternal life in perfect rest, in glory, in joy, in beatitude unspeakable; that he shall obtain an incorruptible inheritance, a treasure that can never fail, a crown that will not fade, a kingdom that cannot be shaken; wherein he shall enjoy the blissful vision of God, smiling in love upon him; the presence of his gracious Redeemer, embracing him with dear affection; the most delightful society of blessed angels, and just spirits made perfect; a state of felicity,

1 Pet. i. 4.  
Luke xii.  
33.

1 Pet. v. 4.  
Heb. xii.  
28.

1 Cor. ii. 9.  
Heb. xii.  
23.

surpassing all words to express it, all thoughts to conceive it; of which the brightest splendours, and the choicest pleasures here can yield but a faint resemblance; how can he forbear earnestly to embrace and pursue such a course of practice? what zeal must such a persuasion inspire; what vigour must it rouse within him? who upon any terms would forfeit the hopes of such a happiness? who would not be glad to undertake any pains, or endure any hardships for it?

And who likewise heartily is persuaded, that by vicious conversation he shall incur the wrath of Almighty God, and stand obnoxious to the strokes of his severe justice; that persisting therein he infallibly must drop into the bottomless pit, into that utter darkness, that furnace of fire unquenchable, that lake of flaming brimstone; where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the immortal worm shall gnaw on his heart, and he must feel the pangs of a never-dying death; that state of most bitter remorse, of most horrid despair, of most forlorn disconsolateness, of continual and endless torment; wherein he shall be banished from the face of God, and by immutable destiny barred from all light, all ease, all solace; from any glimpse of hope, from any respite of pain; the wretchedness of which condition not the sharpest pain of body, not the sorest anguish of mind, not the saddest distress here can anywise reach or represent; whoever, I say, is possessed with a belief of these things consequent on a wicked life, will he not thence be effectually scared from it? what bait of temptation shall allure him, what force shall drive him thereto? will he for a flash of pleasure, for a puff of fame,

Matt.  
xviii. 30.  
Jude 6.  
2 Pet. ii. 4.  
Luke xiii.  
28.  
Rev. xx. 3.  
Matt. viii.  
12;  
xiii. 42, 50.  
Mark ix.  
43, 45.  
Isai.  
xxxiii. 14.  
Rev. xx. 1,  
10.  
Dan. xii. 2.  
2 Thess. i.  
9.  
Rom. ii. 9.

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for a lump of pelf; will he in compliment or complaisance to others, in apish imitation or compliance with a fashion, out of mere wantonness, or in regard to some petty interest; will he in hope of any worldly good, or fear of any inconvenience here, suffer himself to be cast into that dismal state? will he not sooner go and shake a lion by the paw, sooner provoke an adder to bite him, sooner throw himself down a precipice, or leap into a caldron of burning pitch? Certainly in reason to believe such things, and to sin, can hardly be consistent.

Such a general influence is faith, looking with a provident eye upon future rewards and consequences of things, apt to have upon our practice: the which collaterally taking in the glorious attributes of God, the gracious performances of our Saviour, the beauty and sweetness of each Divine precept, the manifold obligations and encouragements to duty, the whole latitude and harmony of evangelical truth, all tending to the recommendation of holiness, what efficacy must it needs have! how powerfully must it incite us to good practice!

1 Pet. i.

22.  
Acts xv. 9.

We are told, that faith doth purify our souls, and cleanse our hearts<sup>a</sup>; that is, our whole interior man, all the faculties of our soul; disposing them to an universal obedience and conformity to God's holy will; and so it is: for faith not only doth clear our understanding from its defects, (blindness, ignorance, error, doubt,) but it cleanseth our will from its vicious inclinations, (from stubborn, froward, wanton, giddy humours;) it freeth our

<sup>a</sup> Τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες.—1 Pet. i. 22.

Καθαρίσας τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν.—Acts xv. 9.

affections from disorder and distemper, in tendency toward bad objects, and in pursuit of indifferent things with immoderate violence; it purgeth our conscience, or reflexive powers, from anxious fear, suspicion, anguish, dejection, despair, and all such passions which corrode the soul: how it effecteth this we might declare; but we cannot better set forth its efficacy and puissance, than by considering the special and immediate influence it plainly hath in the production of each virtue, or on the performance of every duty; *Add to your faith virtue*, <sup>2 Pet. i. 5.</sup> saith St Peter; implying the natural order of <sup>1 Tim. vi. 11.</sup> things, and that if true faith precede, virtue will <sup>2 Tim. ii. 22.</sup> easily follow.

The chief of all virtues, piety, (comprising the love of God, fear and reverence of him, confidence in him, gratitude for his favours and mercies, devotion toward him, a disposition to worship and serve him,) seemeth according to reason inevitably consequent from it; for can we believe God super-excellent in all perfection, and immensely benign toward us; can we be persuaded that in free goodness he did create us, and doth continually preserve us in being; that his bounty hath conferred on us all our endowments of soul, and all our accommodations of life; that he hath a tender desire of our welfare, from which even our most heinous offences and provocations cannot divert him; that he most wonderfully hath provided for our happiness; in order thereto, when we had rebelled and revolted from him, sending down out of his bosom, from the top of celestial glory and bliss, his only dear Son, into this base and frail state, to sustain the infirmities of our nature, the inconveniences of a poor

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life, the pains of a bitter and shameful death, for our recovery from sin and misery; that with infinite patience he driveth on this gracious design, continually watching over us, attracting us to good, and reclaiming us from evil by his grace, notwithstanding our frequent and stiff reluctancies thereto; can, I say, we heartily believe these points, and not love him? Can the eye of faith behold so lovely beauty, so ravishing sweetness in him, and the heart not be affected? Can we apprehend so many miracles of nature, of providence, of grace performed by him for our sake, and not be thankful to him? Can we likewise believe God infinitely powerful, infinitely just, infinitely pure, and withal not dread him, not adore him? Can we believe him most able, most willing, most ready to do us good, and not confide in him? or can we take him to be most veracious, most faithful, most constant, and not rely on his promises? Can we avow him to be our Maker, our Patron, our Lord, our Judge, and not deem ourselves much obliged, much concerned to serve him? Can we believe, that God in our need is accessible, that he calleth and inviteth us to him, that he is ever willing, and ever ready to hear us, that he is by promise engaged to grant us whatever we do with humble fervency and constancy request; yet forbear to pray, or easily desist from it? Do we believe his omnipresence and omniscience; that he is with us wherever we go, doth know all we think, hear all we say, see all we do; and will not belief engage us to think honestly, to speak reverently, to act innocently and decently before him? Do we believe, that God's commands do proceed from that will, to which rectitude is

essential; from that wisdom, which infallibly discerneth what is just and fit; from that goodness, which will require from us nothing but what is best for us; from that unquestionable and uncontrollable authority, to which all things are subject, and must submit; will not this sufficiently engage us to obedience? Surely the real belief (such as we have about common things, apprehended by our reason or by our sense) of any such Divine act, or attribute, cannot fail to strike pious affection, and pious awe into us.

After piety, the next great virtue is charity, the which also is easily derived from a pure heart, as St Paul speaketh, and faith unfeigned; it representing peculiar obligations and inducements there-<sup>2 Tim. i. 3, 5.</sup> to, from the most peremptory commands of God, from the signal recompenses annexed to that duty, from the strict relations between Christians, from the stupendous patterns of charity set before us. Who can withhold love from him, whom he believeth his brother, in a way far nobler than that of nature, so constituted by God himself, the common Father, by spiritual regeneration, and adoption of grace; whom he believeth born of the same heavenly seed, renewed after the same Divine image, quickened by the same Holy Spirit; united to him not only in blood, but in soul; resembling him, not in temper of body or lineaments of face, but in conformity of judgment and practice; partner of the one inheritance, and destined to lead a life with him through all eternity, in peaceful consortship of joy and bliss? Who can deny him love, whom he believeth out of the same miserable case by the same price redeemed into the same state of mercy? for

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whom he by faith vieweth the common Saviour divesting himself of glory, pinching himself with want, wearying himself with labour, loaded with contumelies, groaning under pain, weltering in blood, and breathing out his soul, propounding all this as an example of our charity, and demanding it from us as the most special instance of our grateful obedience to him? What greater endearments can be imagined, what more potent incentives of love, what more indissoluble bands of friendship, than are these? Can such a believer forbear to wish his neighbour well, to have complacency in his good, to sympathise with his adversities, to perform all offices of kindness to him? Can he in the need of his brother shut up his bowels of compassion, or withhold his hand from relieving him? Can a man know, that God requireth this practice as the noblest fruit of our faith, and most acceptable part of our obedience, which he hath promised to crown with most ample rewards; can he believe, that God will recompense his labour of love with everlasting rest, and for a small expense of present goods will bestow immense treasures in the other world, and yet abstain from charitable beneficence? Who can forbear sowing, that believeth he shall reap so plentiful a crop; or abstain from dealing in that trade, whereby he is assured to be so vast a gainer?

1 John iii.  
17.

Heb. vi.  
10.

In like manner is faith productive of meekness, in comporting with injuries, discourtesies, neglects, and provocations of any kind: for who can be fiercely angry, who can entertain any rancorous grudge or displeasure against him, whom he believeth his brother, and that upon so many accounts

he is obliged to love him? Who that believeth SERM. III. God hath pardoned himself so much, and doth continually bear so many wrongs, so many indignities from him, will not in conscience and gratitude toward God bear with the infirmities of his neighbour? Who can look upon the pattern of his Saviour, patiently enduring so many grievous affronts, without a disposition to imitate him, and to do the like for his sake? Who that taketh himself for a child of God, a citizen of heaven, an heir of eternal glory, can be so much concerned in any trivial accident here; can deign to have his passion stirred for any worldly respect? as if his honour could be impaired, or his interest suffer diminution by any thing said or done below.

Again, Faith is the mother of sincerity, that comprehensive virtue, which seasoneth all other virtues, and keepeth them sound: for it assuring us, that an all-seeing eye doth view our heart, doth Ps. cxxxix. 2, 3. encompass our paths, is present to all our closest retirements; that, *All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, Heb. iv. 13. how vain must it appear to us anywise to dissemble, or prevaricate, speaking otherwise than we think, acting otherwise than we pretend, seeming otherwise than we are; concealing our real intents, or disguising them under masks of deceitful appearance? If we believe, that we shall be judged, not according to the opinions of men concerning us, or our port and garb in this world, but as we are in ourselves, and according to strictest truth; that in the close of things we shall be set forth in our right colours and complexion, all varnish being wiped away; that all our thoughts, words, and deeds shall be exposed to



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— most public censure; that hypocrisy will be a sore aggravation of our sin, and much enlarge our shame; how can we satisfy ourselves otherwise than in the pure integrity of our heart, and clear uprightness of our dealing?

Likewise, the admirable virtue of humility, or sobriety of mind, doth sprout from faith; informing us, that we have nothing of our own to boast of, but that all the good we have, we can do, we may hope for, are debts we owe to God's pure bounty and mercy; prompting us to assume nothing to ourselves, but to ascribe all the honour of our endowments, of our performances, of our advantages unto God; keeping us in continual dependence upon God for the succours of his providence and his grace; representing to us our natural weakness, vileness, and wretchedness, together with the adventitious defects and disadvantages from our wilful misbehaviour, the unworthiness of our lives, the many heinous sins we have committed, and the grievous punishments we have deserved.

He who by the light of faith doth see, that he came naked into the world, heir to nothing but the sad consequences of the original apostasy; that he is a worm, crawling on earth, feeding on dust, and tending to corruption; that he liveth only by  
Gen. ii. 17. reprieve from that fatal sentence, The day thou sinnest thou shalt die; that he was a caitiff wretch, a mere slave to sin, a forlorn captive of hell; and that all his recovery thence, or capacity of a better state, is wholly due to mercy; that he subsisteth only upon alms, and hath nothing but his sins and miseries, which he may call his own; he that believeth these things, what conceit can he have of

himself, what confidence in his own worth, what complacency in his estate? SERM.  
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Faith also doth engage to the virtue of temperance; discovering not only the duty, but the necessity thereof, in regard to our state, which is a state of continual exercise and strife; wherefore as wrestlers with many strong adversaries, as racers for a noble prize, we by good diet and constant labour must keep ourselves in heart, in temper, in breath to perform those combats; according to that of St Paul, *Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.* 1 Cor. ix.  
25.

Again, Faith is productive of contentedness in our state: for how is it possible that he, who is fully satisfied, that God appointeth his station, and allotteth his portion to each one; that all occurrences depend on his will, and are managed by his providence, should take anything amiss; as if it could hap better, than as infinite goodness pleaseth, and infinite wisdom determineth? How can he, that believeth God most powerful and able, most kind and willing, ever present and ready to help him, be in any case disconsolate, or despair of seasonable relief? What can discompose him, who knoweth himself, if he pleaseth, immoveably happy; that his best good is secure from all attacks, and beyond the reach of any misfortune; that desiring what is best, he cannot fail of his desire; that (himself excepted) all the world cannot anywise wrong or hurt him?

He that is assured, those precepts, *Be careful for nothing; Cast all your burden on God; Be content with such things as ye have*—were not given to mock and gull us; that those declarations and Matt. vi.  
25.  
Phil. iv. 6.  
1 Pet. v. 7.  
Heb. xiii.  
5.

SERM. III. promises, *There is no want to them that fear God ;*  
 Luke xii. 29. *No good thing will God withhold from them that*  
 Ps. xxxiv. 9; *walk uprightly; There shall no evil happen to the just ;*  
 lxxxiv. 11. *The desire of the righteous shall be granted; All*  
 Prov. xii. 21; *things work together for good to them who love God ;*  
 x. 24. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteous-*  
 Rom. viii. 28. *ness, and all these things shall be added unto you,*  
 Matt. vi. 33. *were seriously made, and will surely be performed,*  
*how loose must his mind be from all solicitude and*  
*anxiety! how steady a calm, how sweet a serenity*  
*will that faith spread over his soul, in regard to all*  
*worldly contingencies!*

It will also beget a cheerful tranquillity of mind, and peace of conscience, in regard to our future state; that which St Paul calleth *All joy and peace in believing*; which the Apostle to the Hebrews termeth *The confidence and rejoicing of hope*; of which St Peter saith, *Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*: for he that is persuaded, that God (in whose disposal his fortune and felicity are) is reconciled and kindly affected toward him; that he doth concern himself in designing and procuring his salvation; that to purchase the means thereof for him, the Son of God purposely came down, and suffered death; that an act of oblivion is past, and a full remission of sins exhibited to him, if he will embrace it; that now, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; and that, *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*; that blessing is his portion, and that an eternal heritage of joy is reserved for him, what ease must he find in his conscience, what comfort must possess his heart! how effectually will that of the Prophet be accomplished in him, *Thou*

*will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee!* SERM.  
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Again, It is faith which breedeth the courage, and upholdeth the patience requisite to support us in our spiritual course.

It doth inspire courage, prompting to attempt the bravest enterprises, disposing to prosecute them resolutely, and enabling happily to achieve them: for he that believeth himself in his undertakings backed by Omnipotence, and that, as St Paul, he can do all things through Christ strengthening him, what should he fear to set upon, what difficulty should keep him off, what hazard should dismay him? he that knoweth himself, by reason of the succour attending him, infinitely to overmatch all opposition, whom should he not dare to encounter? May he not well say with David, *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?* Phil. iv.  
13;  
i. 28.  
1 John iv.  
4.  
Ps. xxvii.  
1;  
cxviii. 6;  
xlvi. 1, 2.  
Matt. x.  
28. Let all the world, let earth and hell combine to invade him<sup>b</sup>, how can that mate his spirit, if he believe they cannot overthrow him, or hurt him, being secured by the invincible protection of him, to whose will all things do bow; in comparison to whom nothing is puissant, beside whom nothing is really formidable; seeing none but he can kill, none can touch the soul?

If we be armed with the spiritual panoply,

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Chrys. Opp. Tom. vii. Orat. ii. p. 51. [Ὅπερ γὰρ ἀρχόμενος εἶπον, εἰς τοῦτο καὶ νῦν καταλύσω τὸν λόγον, ὅτι εἴ τις βλάπτεται καὶ ἀδικοῖτο, παρ' ἑαυτοῦ πάντως τοῦτο πάσχει, οὐ παρ' ἐτέρων, κἢ μυρίοι οἱ ἀδικούντες καὶ ἐπηρεάζοντες θῶσι· ὡς εἶγε μὴ παρ' ἑαυτοῦ τοῦτο πάθοι, οἱ γὴν ἀπασαν καὶ θάλατταν οἰκούντες κοινῇ ἅπαντες εἰ ἐπέλθωσι, οὐδὲ μικρὸν τοῦτον παράβλαψαι δυνήσονται, τὸν ἐν Κυρίῳ γρηγορούντα καὶ νήφοντα.]

SERM. III. having our head covered with the helmet of salvation, our heart guarded with the breastplate of righteousness, our loins girt about with truth, our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, all our body sheltered by the impenetrable shield of faith; and wielding in our hands by faith the penetrant two-edged sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; what assaults may we not sustain, what foes shall we not easily repel?

The most redoubtable enemy we have is our own flesh, which, with a mighty force of violent appetites and impetuous passions, is ever struggling with our reason, and warring against our soul; but it faith alone dareth to resist, and is able to quell; opposing to the present delights of sense the hopes of future joy, quashing transitory satisfactions by the fears of endless torment.

The world is another powerful enemy; ever striving, by its corrupt principles, by its bad examples, by its naughty fashions, by its menaces of persecution, damage, and disgrace, by its promises of vain honour, base profit, and foul pleasure, to overthrow and undo us; but a resolute faith will defeat its attempts; for, *He, saith St John, that is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith:* the faith of a better world will defend us from the frowns and the flatteries of this; the riches, glories, and joys of heaven, thereby presented to our minds, will secure us from being enchanted with the wealth, splendours, and pleasures of earth.

Another fierce adversary is the cursed fiend; *Who, ever, like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking to devour us, or like a treacherous snake lieth in*

wait to bite us; raising panic fears to daunt and SERM. III. affright us; laying subtle trains of temptation to abuse and seduce us: but him by resistance we may easily put to flight, for, *Resist the devil*, saith James iv. St James, *and he will flee from you*; and how we 7. must resist him St Peter telleth us, *Whom resist* Eph. iv. 27. *steadfast in faith*; and St Paul also, *Above all*, saith 1 Pet. v. 9. Eph. vi. 16. he, *taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one*: if we hold forth this glittering shield, it will dazzle his sight, and damp his courage; being not able to endure its lustre, or stand its opposition, he will instantly retire; fearing that by our victory over his temptations (through reliance on God's help, and adherence to his truth) our reward shall be heightened, and his torment (the torment of impetuous envy and baffled malice) be increased.

Faith also will arm us with patience to endure whatever events shall be dispensed, with alacrity and comfort; lightening the most heavy burdens imposed on us, sweetening the most distasteful occurrences incident to us: for,

He who is persuaded, that by any damage here sustained for conscience toward God, he shall become a huge gainer, receiving, as the Gospel promiseth, an hundred-fold, and inheriting eternal Matt. xix. 29. life, what will he not gladly lose? will he not willingly put forth all he hath in this most profitable Luke xviii. 30. usury? will he not, as those Hebrews did, take Phil. iii. 8. joyfully the spoiling of his goods, knowing that he Heb. x. 34. hath in heaven a better and an enduring substance?

He who believeth, that in regard to any dis- Matt. v. 12. grace cast on him for his virtue, he shall be honoured by God, and crowned with heavenly glory,

SERM. will he not in a manner be proud and ambitious of  
III. such disgrace? will he not, as the Apostles did,

Acts v. 41. rejoice that he is counted worthy to suffer shame  
1 Pet. iv. for the name of Christ?  
14.

He who trusteth, that for a little pains taken  
Matt. v. in God's service, he shall receive *πολὺν μισθόν*,  
12. *abundant wages*, far exceeding the merit of his  
Luke vi. labour, will he not cheerfully bear any toil or  
35. *drudgery* therein?  
1 Cor. iii. 8.

He who with St Paul computeth, *That the light*  
Rom. viii. *afflictions, which are but for a moment, are not*  
18. *worthy to be compared with the glories that shall be*  
*revealed*; and that, *Those light momentary afflictions*  
2 Cor. iv. *do work for us a far more exceeding weight of*  
17. *glory*; will they not, indeed, be light unto him; will  
he not feel them lying on him, as a few straws or  
feathers?

He who conceiveth our Lord's word true, that  
Matt. x. by losing his life he shall find it, or that death shall  
39; xvi. 25. become to him a door into a happy immortality,  
Luke xvii. 33. would he not gladly upon such terms be killed all  
Ps. cxxvi. 5. the day long, and be always delivered unto death  
2 Tim. ii. 12. for Jesus?  
1 Pet. iv. 13.  
Rom. viii. 17.

He who by faith is assured, that any disasters  
2 Cor. iv. befalling him are not inflictions of wrath, but ex-  
10. pressions of love toward him, by God in kindness  
Phil. i. 29. dispensed as trials of his faith, as exercises of his  
Rom. viii. 36. virtue, as occasions of his acquiring more plentiful  
2 Cor. iv. 11. rewards, how can he be disgusted at them, or dis-  
1 Cor. iv. 9. composed by them? why should he not rather  
Acts xx. 24; xxi. 13. accept them as favours, as felicities, with a thank-  
James i. 3. ful and joyful heart; *Counting it*, as St James  
1 Pet. i. 5. adviseth, *all joy when he falleth into divers tempta-*  
Rom. v. 3. *tions.*  
Matt. v. 12.  
James i. 2.  
Luke vi. 23.

In fine, it is faith alone which can plant in us SERM. III. that which is the root of all contentedness and all patience, a just indifference and unconcernedness about all things here: it alone can untack our Col. iii. 1. minds and affections from this world, rearing our souls from earth, and fixing them in heaven: for if we are persuaded, there is a state of life infinitely more desirable than the best condition here; if we believe there are things attainable by us, incomparably better than any which this world affordeth; in respect to which all these glories are but smoke, all these riches are but dirt, all these delights are but dreams, all these businesses are but triflings, all these substances are but shadows<sup>c</sup>; how in our minds can we prize, how in our affections can we cleave unto these things! how then can we find in our hearts to spend upon them more care or pain than is needful!

He that taketh himself here to be out of his element, that he is but a stranger and sojourner Heb. xi. upon earth<sup>d</sup>, that he hath here no abiding city, no<sup>13</sup> country, no house, no land, no treasure, no considerable interest, but that he is merely wayfaring, in passage toward his true home and heavenly country; the Jerusalem above, whereof he is a Gal. iv. 26. citizen, where his grand concerns do lie, where he hath reserved for him immoveable possessions and unvaluable treasures; where he is designed to enjoy most noble privileges and most illustrious dignities in the court of the great King; how can he

<sup>c</sup> Omnia imaginaria in seculo, et nihil veri.—Tertull. de Cor. cap. xiii. [Opp. p. 109 B.]

<sup>d</sup> Ἡ πρώτη ἀρετὴ, καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ, τὸ ξένον εἶναι τοῦ κόσμου τοῦτου.—Chrys. in Heb. xi. 13. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. 551.]



SERM. have his heart here sticking in this earthly clay,  
 III. entangled with the petty cares, amused with the  
 sorry entertainments of this life? how can he

Gal. vi. 14; otherwise than with St Paul be dead, and cruci-  
 ii. 20. fied to this world? how can he withhold his mind  
 from soaring thither in contemplation, and in affec-  
 tion dwelling there°, whither his desires and hopes  
 do all tend, where his joy and felicity are found,  
 where the great objects of his esteem and love do  
 reside?

But you will perhaps interpose, and say: These  
 are, indeed, fine sayings, but where do such effects  
 appear? who, I pray, doth practise according to  
 these notions? where is that gallant to be found,  
 who doth work so great exploits? where may we  
 discern that height of piety, that tenderness of  
 charity, that meek comportment with injuries and  
 affronts, that clear sincerity, that depth of humility,  
 that strictness of temperance, that perfect contented-  
 ness, and undisturbed calmness of mind, that stout-  
 ness of courage and stiffness of patience, which  
 you talk of as the undoubted issues of faith? who  
 is the man that with such glee doth hug afflictions,  
 or biddeth adversity so welcome to his home? where  
 dwell they, who so little regard this world, or so  
 much affect the other? do we not see men run as  
 if they were wild after preferment, wealth, and  
 pleasure? what do they else, but scrape and scramble  
 and scuffle for these things? doth not every man  
 moan the scantiness of his lot, doth not every  
 man flinch at any trouble, doth not every one with  
 all his might strive to rid himself of anything

\* Ἐκεῖ μεταωρίζει τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν ἡμετέραν ἢ πίστις.—Id. Or. LV.  
 Tom. v. [p. 370.]

disgustful to his sense or fancy? Are not therefore such encomiums of faith mere speculations, or brave rodomontades of divinity? SERM.  
III.

The objection, I confess, is a shrewd one; but I must reply to it: you say, Where are such effects, where are such men? I ask then, Where is faith, where are believers? shew me the one, and I will shew you the other: if such effects do not appear, it is no argument that faith cannot produce them, but a sign that faith is wanting; as if a tree doth not put forth in due season, we conclude the root is dead; if a fountain yield no streams, we suppose it dried up: *Shew me*, saith St James, *thy faith by thy works*; implying, that if good works do not shine forth in the conversation, it is suspicious there is no true faith in the heart: for such faith is not a feeble weening, or a notion swimming in the head, it is not a profession issuing from the mouth, it is not following such a garb, or adhering to such a party, but a persuasion fixed in the heart by good reason, by firm resolution, by lively sense; it is *With the heart*, as St Paul saith, *man believeth unto righteousness*; that is the faith we speak of, and to which we ascribe the production of so great and worthy effects: if a man wanteth that, attested by practice suitable, though he know all the points exactly, though he readily will say *Amen* to every article of the Creed, though he wear all the badges of a Christian, though he frequent the congregations, and comply with the forms of our Religion, yet is he really an infidel: for is he not an infidel who denieth God? and is he not such a renegado who liveth impiously? he is so in St Paul's account; for, *They profess*, saith he of such persons, *that they*

James ii.  
18.

Rom. x.  
10.

Tit. i. 16.

- SERM. III. *know God, but in works they deny him; and, He is not a Jew, saith the same Apostle, (he is not a Christian, may we by parity of reason affirm,) who is one outwardly; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly; and faith is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God: we may attribute to a barren conceit, or to a formal profession, the name of faith, but it is in an equivocal or wide sense; as a dead man is called a man, or a dry stick resting in the earth a tree; for so, Faith, saith St James, without works is dead; is indeed but a trunk, or carcass of faith, resembling it in outward shape, but void of its spirit and life.*
- Rom. ii. 28.
- James ii. 17;
- ii. 26.
- Luke xviii. 8.

To our infidelity therefore, that overspreading vice; to the unsincerity, or deadness of our faith, the great defects of our practice are to be imputed; that is the grand source from which impiety doth so overflow; that so few instances of sprightly virtue are visible, may be a sign the time is the same, or very like to that, of which our Lord saith, *When the Son of man cometh, shall he indeed find faith upon the earth?*

But if such effects can now rarely be found, yet time hath been, when they were more rife, scarce any time hath been quite destitute of them; every age since the foundation of things may have tokens and trophies to shew of faith's victorious efficacy; so many actions as there have been truly great and glorious, so many gallant feats have been achieved by faith: if we survey the lives of the ancient Patriarchs, of the Prophets, of the Apostles, of the Martyrs and Confessors of true Religion, their faith in all their works is most conspicuous.

Faith recommended that excellent sacrifice of Abel to Divine acceptance, and advanced him to the rank of first martyr for piety.

SERM.  
III.

Heb. xi. 4.

On the wings of faith did Enoch mount to heaven, snatching the reward due to his faithful, and therefore well-pleasing obedience.

Faith preserved Noah from two mighty deluges, one of sin, the other of water, overflowing the earth; by it he stemmed the torrent of the one, and rode on the back of the other; it encouraged him to be a preacher of righteousness against the grain, and a practiser of it against the fashion of the world, not regarding the common hatred and envy which he did incur thereby; it moved him to undertake that great and strange work of building the ark, for a sanctuary and seminary of mankind; the type of that spiritual vessel, by embarking into which through faith we are saved from utter ruin.

<sup>2</sup> Pet. ii. 5.  
Gen. vii. 1.

Faith disposed Abraham to forsake his country and home, his estate, his kindred, following Divine conduct he knew not whither; to wander abroad and sojourn among barbarous strangers: faith inclined him, at God's command, to sacrifice his only son<sup>f</sup>, a goodly youth in the flower of his age and hopes, worthily most dear unto him; the son of his old age, and the comfort thereof, given to him by miracle and in special favour; the prop of his family, and the heir of promise, by whom his seed was to be propagated, and his memory to flourish; him was he ready in obedience with his own hand to slay, quelling nature and his bowels, thwarting his own hopes, defying all semblances of contradiction,

Heb. xi. 8.

<sup>f</sup> Vid. Chrys. Opp. Tom. vii. p. 17.

SERM.  
III. or clashing between the commands and promises  
of God.

Faith, through the rudest efforts of envy and malice, through the dismal calamities of exile and slavery, through hideous snares of temptation, through villanous slanders, through loathsome prisons and fetters of iron, all sustained with admirable moderation and presence of mind, did rear up Joseph to the helm of that great kingdom.

The same inclined Moses to exchange the dignities and delights of a court for a state of vagrancy and servility; it heartened him to outbrave the invincible obstinacy of a mighty prince; it steeled him with patience to conduct for the space of forty years, through a wild desert, a most perverse and mutinous herd of people.

Faith was mother of that renowned patience, which exhausted Satan's quiver, and wore out his invention in suggesting mischiefs; *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, was the rock, on which that unshakeable patience of Job was founded.

Job xix.  
25.

That pricked the ruddy stripling forward, naked and unarmed, with undaunted heart and countenance, to invade the monster of Gath, that tower of flesh, swelling with rage and pride, and all fenced with brass and steel; *Thou comest to me*, said he, *with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts*: there lay his confidence, thence sprung his admirable courage.

1 Sam.  
xvii. 45.

To this the bold attempts, and the glorious victories of Joshua, of Gideon, of Barak, of Jephtha, of Samson, of Jonathan, of the Maccabees, are worthily ascribed, who with small forces, upon

great disadvantages, did assault, did vanquish SERM. III.  
mighty enemies and oppressors.

This inflamed the zeal of Elias, by which he 1 Kings xviii. 36;  
alone did check and control the degenerate follies of xix. 10;  
his nation, surmounting the indignation of princes xvii. 6.  
which favoured them; it fed him in the wilderness  
by the purveyance of ravens; it framed the wheels 2 Kings ii. 11.  
of that fiery chariot, which transported him into  
heaven.

This made Jeremy, with like zeal and courage,  
dare to carry most unwelcome news and unpleasant  
messages to an outrageous people, not daunted by  
their angry menaces or cruel misusages; his feet Jer. xxxviii. 4.  
sunk into the mire, but faith bore up his heart 6.  
above all discouragement.

This saved the conscience of those three brave  
youths clear from that impiety into which bar-  
barous violence would have driven them, so that  
neither the fury of that great monarch, nor his  
gaping furnace could terrify them into sin; faith  
putting into their mouths those manful words, Dan. iii. 16, 17, 18.  
*Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee  
in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve  
is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace,  
and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But  
if not, be it known unto thee, that we will not serve  
thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou  
hast set up:* their faith carried them undaunted  
into the flames, and kept them untouched within  
them; so that they became as gold not wasted, but  
tried and purified in the furnace.

Neither could a danger no less terrible scare  
the noble Daniel from his devotions; his faith did Heb. xi. 33.  
stop the lions' mouths; and, *He*, saith the text, Dan. vi. 10, 22, 23.

SERM.  
III.

*was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he trusted in his God.*

Such exploits of spiritual prowess were achieved by an Old Testament faith, relying upon God's attributes and providence, although wanting a clear revelation of the promises, which then lay wrapped up in mysteries and shadows; but more heroical acts of fortitude and patience did the bright sunshine of grace and glory upon the minds of our Apostles and primitive saints produce: animated by faith, a little troop of them marched out with resolution to attack all the powers of hell, and to beat down the kingdom of darkness, to despatch all the prejudices and errors of mankind, and to subdue the world to the obedience of Christ; so armed, successfully did they knock down and trample upon all opposition to their glorious designs; they defeated all the secular power and policy; they baffled all the wit, the learning, the eloquence, which stood in their way, or gave them resistance; they triumphed over persecutions, and in regard to all sufferings were more than conquerors; to forsake and forfeit all they had, was their gain; to have nothing, was their wealth; to incur disgraces, was their glory; to be in continual labour and travail, was their ease; fastings, hunger, and thirst, were their pleasure, their feast, their luxury; prisons were chapels to them, in which they preached, and prayed, and sang praises to God; their joy was to suffer; to receive stripes, and undergo torments, was a sport unto them; they constantly defied, they often courted, death.

That they were able to perform such prodigious

Rom. viii.  
37.  
Eph. iii.  
13.

Acts xvi.  
25.

SERM.  
III.

acts, and to endure things so insupportable, was not from a stupid insensibility of things, from a sturdiness of spirit, or stiffness of humour; but from a magnanimity inspired by faith; because they were persuaded of God's will, because they confided in God's help, because they relied on God's word, because they did expect rewards from God able to satisfy for all their pains and losses; this made them to undertake so bold enterprises, and carried them with insuperable constancy through all; hence were they glad to abandon their ease and pleasure, to prostitute their honour and reputation, to part with their substance, to venture their safety, to sacrifice their lives for God's truth; *Therefore do we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe*, is the short account which St Paul rendereth of it: and infallibly the like effects will faith produce, wherever it is found, in a degree proportionable to its sincerity and strength.

*A grain of faith*, our Saviour saith, *is able to remove mountains*; that is, to accomplish things in appearance very strange and difficult: and, *To him that believeth all things are possible*, saith the same mouth of truth: and, *He*, saith our Lord again, *that believeth in me, the works that I do he also shall do; and greater works than these shall he do*<sup>5</sup>. If this be true in reference to works concerning the frame of nature, it is surely no less true in regard to those which lie within the more proper sphere of faith, to moral and spiritual operations: if faith can obtain the help of God, enabling to

1 Tim. iv.  
10.  
Rom. viii.  
17.  
2 Tim. ii.  
11.  
1 Pet. i. 7;  
iv. 13.  
2 Tim. iv.  
8.

Matt. xvii.  
20;  
xxi. 21.  
Luke xvii.  
6.  
Mark xi.  
23;  
ix. 23.  
John xiv.  
12.

<sup>5</sup> Vid. Chrys. Opp. Tom. v. Orat. LXIV. p. 442 et seqq.



SERM. transfer a mountain, it also can procure his grace  
 III. disposing to restrain an appetite, or repress a  
 passion.

Now that which is in itself so worthy and lovely, which is attended with so good consorts; which is the daughter of so excellent causes, the sister of so great virtues, the parent of so admirable effects, how can it otherwise than be very precious, very laudable, very acceptable? how can we at all wonder, that it should be graced with such commendations, and crowned with such rewards?

Let us therefore (to conclude) be exhorted, if we do want it, to endeavour the acquist of it by all proper means, (by serious contemplation and study, by prayer to God, by voiding all obstructions of it:) if we have it, to hold it fast, to cherish it, to improve it, as by all good ways, so especially by good practice<sup>h</sup>; that we may produce the good fruits, and obtain the happy rewards thereof, through the mercies of God in Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all praise.

Rom. xv.  
 13. *Now the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Chrys. in Joh. Hom. vi. Opp. Tom. ii. [p. 584.]

**I** Beliebe, &c.

## SERMON IV.

OF JUSTIFYING FAITH.

ROM. V. 1.

*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with  
God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**T**HEREFORE; that word implies the text to SERM.  
IV.  
be a conclusion (by way of inference, or of recapitulation) resulting from the precedent discourse. It is, indeed, the principal conclusion, which (as being supposed a peculiar and a grand part of the Christian doctrine, and deserving therefore a strong proof and clear vindication) St Paul designed by several arguments to make good. Upon the words, being of such importance, I should so treat, as, first, to explain them, or to settle their true sense; then, to make some practical application of the truths they contain.

As to the explicatory part, I should consider first, what the faith is, by which we are said to be justified; 2 what being justified doth import; 3 how by such faith we are so justified; 4 what the peace with God is, here adjoined to justification; 5 what relation the whole matter bears to our Lord Jesus Christ; or how through him being justified, we have peace with God; in the prosecution of which particulars it would appear, who

SERM. the persons justified are, and who justifies us; with  
IV. other circumstances incident.

I shall at this time only insist upon the first particular, concerning the notion of faith proper to this place; in order to the resolution of which inquiry, I shall lay down some useful observations: and,

I First, I observe, that faith, or belief, in the vulgar acception, doth signify (as we have it briefly described in Aristotle's Topics<sup>a</sup>) a σφοδρά ὑπόληψις, *an earnest opinion* or persuasion of mind concerning the truth of some matter propounded; such an opinion being produced by, or grounded upon some forcible reason, (either immediate evidence of the matter; or sense and experience; or some strong argument of reason, or some credible testimony; for whatever we assent unto, and judge true upon any such grounds and inducements, we are commonly said to believe<sup>b</sup>). This is the popular acception of the word; and according thereto I conceive it usually signifies in Holy Scripture; which being not penned by masters of human art or science, nor directed to persons of more than ordinary capacities or improvements, doth not intend to use words otherwise than in the most plain and ordinary manner.

Belief therefore in general, I suppose, denotes a firm persuasion of mind concerning the truth of

<sup>a</sup> iv. 5. [10.]

<sup>b</sup> Aut proba esse, quæ credis; aut si non probas, quomodo credis?—Tertull. adv. Marc. v. 1. [Opp. p. 461 D.]

"Ὅταν γάρ πως πιστεύῃ, καὶ γνώριμοι αὐτῷ ὦσιν αἱ ἀρχαὶ, ἐπίσταται.—Arist. Eth. vi. 3. [4.]

Ἀριστοτέλης τὸ ἐπόμενον τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ κρίμα ὡς ἀληθές, τὸ δέ τι πίστιν εἶναι φησι.—Clem. Alex. Strom. ii. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 436.]

"Ὅνιοι γάρ πιστεύουσιν οὐδὲν ἦττον οἷς δοξάζουσιν, ἢ ἕτεροι οἷς ἐπίστανται.—Arist. Eth. vii. 3. [4.]

what is propounded; whether it be some one single proposition, (as when Abraham believed, that *God was able to perform what he had promised*; and Sarah, that *God, who had promised, was faithful*;) or some system of propositions, as when we are said to believe God's word, (that is, all which by his Prophets was in his name declared;) to believe the truth, (that is, all the propositions taught in the true Religion as so;) to believe God's commandments, (that is, the doctrines in God's law to be true, and the precepts thereof to be good;) to believe the Gospel, (that is, to be persuaded of the truth of all the propositions asserted or declared in the Gospel).

SERM.  
IV.

Rom. iv.

21.  
Heb. xi.

19, 11.

Ps. cvi. 24;

lxxviii. 32.

2 Thess. ii.

12.

Ps. cxix.

66.

Mark i. 15.

Phil. i. 27.

2 I observe, secondly, that whereas frequently some person, or single thing is represented (*verbo tenus*) as the object of faith, this doth not prejudice, or in effect alter the notion I mentioned; for it is only a figurative manner of speaking, whereby is always meant the being persuaded concerning the truth of some proposition, or propositions, relating to that person or thing: for otherwise, it is unintelligible how any incomplex thing, as they speak, can be the complete or immediate object of belief. Beside simple apprehension (or framing the bare idea of a thing) there is no operation of a man's mind terminated upon one single object; and belief of a thing surely implies more than a simple apprehension thereof: what it is, for instance, to believe this or that proposition about a man, or a tree, (that a man is such a kind of thing, that a tree hath this or that property,) is very easy to conceive; but the phrase believing a man, or a tree, (taken properly, or excluding

SERM. figures,) is altogether insignificant and unintel-  
 IV. ligible: indeed to believe, πιστεῦειν, is the effect  
 τοῦ πεπεισθαι, of a persuasive argument, and the  
 result of ratiocination; whence in Scripture it is  
 commended, or discommended, as implying a good  
 or bad use of reason. The proper object of faith  
 is therefore some proposition deduced from others  
 by discourse; as it is said, that *Many of the Sa-*  
 John iv. *maritans believed in Christ because of the woman's*  
 39; *word, who testified, that he told her all that ever*  
*she did*; or as St Thomas believed, because he  
 saw; or as when it is said, that *Many believed*  
 xx. 29; *on our Lord's name, beholding the miracles which*  
 ii. 23. *he did*. When then, for example, the Jews are  
 required to believe Moses, (or to believe in Moses,  
 Exod. xiv. 31;  
 xix. 9. after the Hebrew manner of speaking,) it is meant,  
 John v. to be persuaded of the truth of what he delivered,  
 45, &c. as proceeding from Divine revelation; or to  
 believe him to be what he professed himself, a  
 messenger or prophet of God. So to believe the  
 2 Chron. Prophets, or in the Prophets (בְּנְבִיאִים) was to be  
 xx. 20. persuaded concerning the truth of what they  
 uttered in God's name, (that the doctrines were  
 true, the commands were to be obeyed, the threats  
 and promises should be performed, the predictions  
 should be accomplished: *To believe all which the Pro-*  
 Luke xxiv. *phets did say*, as our Saviour speaks; *To believe all*  
 25. *things written in the Prophets*, as St Paul). So to  
 Acts xxiv. believe God's works (a phrase we have in the  
 14. Psalms) signifies, to be persuaded, that those works  
 Ps. lxxviii. did proceed from God, or were the effects of his  
 32. good providence: to believe in man (that which is  
 Jer. xvii. 5; so often prohibited and dissuaded) denotes the  
 xlv. 25. being persuaded, that man in our need is able to

relieve and succour us: lastly, to believe in God (a SERM. IV. duty so often enjoined and inculcated) is to be persuaded, that God is veracious in whatever he says; Ps. cxviii. 8, &c. faithful in performance of what he promises; perfectly wise, powerful, and good; able and willing to do us good: the being persuaded, I say, of all these propositions, or such of them as suit the present circumstances and occasion, is to believe in God: thus, in fine, to believe on a person or thing, is only a curt expression, (figuratively) denoting the being persuaded of the truth of some proposition relating, in one way or other, to that person or thing, (which way is commonly discernible by considering the nature, or state of such a person, or such a thing;) the use of which observation may afterward appear.

3 I observe, thirdly, that (as it is ordinary in like cases concerning the use of words) the word belief is by a kind of *synecdoche* (or *metonymy*, if you please) so commonly extended in signification, as, together with such a persuasion as we spoke of, to imply whatever by a kind of necessity, natural or moral, doth result from it; so comprehending those acts of will, those affections of soul, and those deeds, which may be presumed consequent upon such a persuasion: for instance, when God commanded Abraham to forsake his country, promising him a happy establishment in the land of Canaan, with a perpetual blessing upon his posterity; Abraham was persuaded concerning the power and fidelity of God, and concerning the truth of what was promised and foretold; in that persuasion his faith, according to the first, proper, and restrained sense, did consist: but because from

- SERM. IV. such a persuasion (being sincere, and strong enough) there did naturally and duly result a satisfaction, or acquiescence in the matter enjoined as best to be done; a choice and resolution to comply with God's appointment; an effectual obedience; a cheerful expectation of a good issue thereupon; therefore all those dispositions of soul and actions concurring become expressed by the name of faith, (that first persuasion being the principle and root of them :) for it is for his faith that he is highly commended; it is for it that he obtained so favourable an approbation and acceptance from God. Yet supposing Abraham to have had such a persuasion concerning God; and yet to have disliked what God required, or to have resolved against doing it, or to have, indeed, disobeyed, or to have disregarded the happy success; it is plain, that Abraham, as to the whole matter, deserved rather much blame, than any commendation; and would not upon that account have had righteousness imputed to him, and have been called the friend of God: when therefore his faith is so magnified, that word comprehends not his bare persuasion only, but all those concomitants thereof, which if they had not gone along therewith, it had been a proof, that such a persuasion was not sincere, (not ἀνυπόκριτος πίστις, *an undissembled faith*; such as St Paul commends in Timothy,) or not strong enough, (not ἀδιάκριτος πίστις, *an undoubting faith*;) but a weak, a small, a dead, an ineffectual faith; which come under blame and reproof. But the effect shewed, that he did not, as St Paul says, ἀσθενεῖν τῇ πίστει, had not a weak, or sickly faith; nor staggered at the promise of God; but was strong in faith, giving
- Rom. iv. 20.
- James ii. 23.
- 1 Tim. i. 5.  
2 Tim. i. 5.
- James iii. 17.  
Rom. iv. 20;
- xiv. 1;
- iv. 9, 20.

glory to God; which he did not only in believing his word, but in suiting his affections, and yielding obedience thereto: *πίστει ὑπήκουσεν ἐξελεῖν*, *By faith he obeyed, so as to forsake his country*, says the Apostle to the Hebrews; and faith thus taken is not only a single act of a man's understanding, or will, but a complex of many dispositions and actions, diffused through divers faculties of a man, denoting the whole complication of good dispositions and actions relating to one matter; which attend upon a true and earnest persuasion concerning it; right choice, submission, and satisfaction of mind, firm resolution, dutiful obedience, constant and cheerful hope, or the like.

4 I observe more nearly to our purpose, fourthly, that the faith here spoken of (being here and elsewhere put absolutely, or by itself, without any adjunct of limitation or distinction) is often set down with terms annexed thereto, explaining and determining it; being sometimes styled the faith of Christ, of Jesus, of God, (*τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, τοῦ Θεοῦ*;) sometimes faith upon Christ, (*εἰς Χριστόν*, and *ἐπὶ Χριστόν*;) faith in Christ, (*ἐν Χριστῷ*;) faith to Christ, to the Lord, to God, (*πιστεῦειν τῷ Χριστῷ, τῷ Κυρίῳ, τῷ Θεῷ*;) faith upon the name of Christ, (*εἰς ὄνομα*;) faith of his name, (*πίστις τοῦ ὀνόματος*;) faith to his name, (*τῷ ὀνόματι*;) which phrases, all, questionless, denoting the same thing, do imply this faith to consist in being persuaded concerning the truth of some propositions chiefly relating to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, either as grounded upon his authority, or appertaining to his person. Now what such propositions are, we may learn from other expressions,

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IV.Matt. vi.  
30;  
viii. 26, &c.  
James ii.  
17, 20.  
Gal. v. 6.  
Heb. xi. 8.Rom. iii. 3,  
21, 26.  
Gal. ii. 16,  
20; iii. 22.  
Phil. iii. 9.  
Rev. ii. 13;  
xiv. 12.  
(*εἰς*) Acts  
xx. 21;  
xxiv. 24;  
xxvi. 18.  
Col. ii. 5,  
&c.  
(*ἐπὶ*) Heb.  
vi. 1.  
Acts ix.  
42;  
xxii. 19,  
&c.  
(*ἐν*) Gal.  
iii. 26.  
1 Tim. iii.  
13.  
2 Tim. iii.  
15.



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descriptions, or circumlocutions declaring the nature and quality of this faith: it is sometimes called the belief of the Gospel, (that is, of the whole system of doctrines, and laws, and promises, and prophecies taught, delivered, or declared by Christ, and his Apostles: *Repent*, said St John the Baptist, *and believe the Gospel*;) the belief of the truth, (that body of truth, signally so called, which was taught by the same authors;) the acknowledgment of the same truth, (πιστός, and ἐπεγνωκώς τὴν ἀλήθειαν are in St Paul the same). Equivalent to those descriptions of this faith are those expressions, which set it out by yielding assent (generally) to what our Lord Christ and his Apostles taught, or to some chief points of their doctrine, inferring the rest; the believing, hearing, receiving the Word of God, of Christ, of the Apostles, the receiving Christ's testimony, and (which is the same) receiving Christ himself; coming unto Christ, (that is, as disciples to their Master, as servants to their Lord, as persons oppressed and enslaved to their Deliverer;) the believing (and knowing) that Jesus was sent by God, and came from him; the believing that Jesus was what he professed himself to be; the confessing, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, he which should come into the world; the King of Israel; that God raised him from the dead; by the belief of which one point, as involving the rest, St Paul expresseth this faith: *If thou, saith he, shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Acts xiii.  
39, &c.  
(τῷ Χρ.)  
Acts v. 14;  
xvi. 34;  
xviii. 28;  
xxvii. 25.  
John v.  
24;  
x. 37, 38;  
xiv. 11,  
&c.  
(ἐκς ὁμοια)  
John i. 2;  
ii. 23.  
i John v.  
13, &c.  
(τοῦ) Acts  
iii. 16.  
(τῷ) i John  
iii. 23.  
Mark i.  
15.  
Phil i. 27.  
i Pet. iv.  
17.  
2 Thess. ii.  
12, 13.  
i Tim. iv.  
3; ii. 4.  
Tit. i. 1.  
Heb. x. 26.  
i Tim. ii.  
4, &c.  
John v.  
46, 47;  
xii. 47,  
48;  
xvii. 8.  
Acts xi. 1.  
John iii.  
33;  
i. 12;  
xiii. 20;  
v. 43;  
vi. 37, 44,  
65; v. 40.  
Matt. xi.  
28.  
John xvii.  
8; v. 24;  
vi. 29;  
xi. 42;  
xvi. 30;  
xvii. 21;  
viii. 24;  
xiii. 19;

The result, upon considering all which expressions declaratory of the nature of this faith (for this surely is not different from that, which is so commonly elsewhere represented in our Saviour's and his Apostles' discourses and writings, as a great duty required of us; as a virtue (or act of virtue) highly commendable, as an especial instrument of our salvation, as a necessary condition prerequisite to our partaking the benefits and privileges by Divine favour conferred on Christians) —the result, I say, is this, that by this faith (as to the first and primary sense thereof) is understood the being truly and firmly persuaded in our minds, that Jesus was what he professed himself to be, and what the Apostles testified him to be; the Messiah, by God designed, foretold, and promised to be sent into the world, to redeem, govern, instruct, and save mankind; our Redeemer and Saviour, our Lord and Master, our King and Judge; the great High Priest, and Prophet of God; the being assured of these, and all other propositions connexed with these; or, in short, the being thoroughly persuaded of the truth of that Gospel which was revealed and taught by Jesus and his Apostles. That this notion is true, those descriptions of this faith, and phrases expressing it, do sufficiently shew; the nature and reason of the thing doth confirm the same: for that such a faith is, in its kind and order, apt and sufficient to promote God's design of saving us; to render us capable of God's favour; to purge our hearts, and work that change of mind, which is necessary in order to the obtaining God's favour, and enjoying happiness; to produce that obedience, which God

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1 John iv.  
2, 15;  
v. 1, 5.  
John iv.  
42; i. 49;  
xx. 31.  
Acts viii.  
37.  
Rom. x. 9.

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requires of us, and without which we cannot be saved. These things are the natural results of such a persuasion concerning those truths; as natural, as the desire and pursuit of any good doth arise from the clear apprehension thereof, or as the shunning of any mischief from the like apprehension; as a persuasion, that wealth is to be got thereby, makes the merchant to undergo the dangers and pains of a long voyage, (verifying that,

Impiger extremos curris mercator ad Indos,  
Per mare pauperiem fugiens, per saxa, per ignes<sup>c</sup>;)

as the persuasion, that health may thereby be recovered, engages a man not only to take down the most unsavoury potions, but to endure cuttings and burnings, (*Ut valeas ferrum patieris et ignes*;) as a persuasion, that refreshment is to be found in a place, doth effectually carry the hungry person thither. So a strong persuasion, that Christian Religion is true, and the way of obtaining happiness, and of escaping misery, doth naturally produce a subjection of heart, and an obedience thereto; and, accordingly, we see the highest of those effects which the Gospel offers, or requires, are assigned to this faith, as results from  
 1 John v. 1; it, or adjuncts thereof: Regeneration; *Whosoever, saith St John, believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is*  
 iv. 15; *born of God*: Spiritual union with God; *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God*  
 ii. 24. *abideth in him, and he in God; If what ye have*  
 John xvi. *heard from the beginning abide in you, ye shall also*  
 27. *abide in the Father and the Son*: The obtaining  
 2 Thess. ii. God's love; *The Father loveth you, because ye have*  
 13. Eph. i. 13. *loved me, and have believed that I came from God*:  
 Acts xv. 7. *9.*  
 1 John v. 5. *victory over the world; Who is he that overcometh*

<sup>c</sup> [Hor. Ep. i. 1. 45.]

*the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* Freedom from spiritual slavery, and becoming true disciples of Christ; *If ye abide in my word, ye are truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free: Obtaining everlasting life; He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, (that is, who believeth my word, which is, indeed, the word of God, who sent me, and in whose name I speak,) hath everlasting life; and, These things were written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing it you may have life in his name; Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth upon me hath eternal life: Rising with Christ, (that is, as to capacity and right); Buried with him in baptism, wherein you are risen with him through faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead: Being saved; Whoever confesses with his mouth the Lord Jesus to be the Son of God, and in his heart believes that God raised him from the dead, shall be saved: Lastly, being justified; For, St Paul adjoins, a man believeth, (in the manner before touched) to righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.* So we see, that the chief of those excellent benefits, to the procuring of which faith (however understood) is anywise conducive, or requisite, belong to the persuasion concerning evangelical truths. We may also observe in the history concerning our Lord, and his Apostles' proceedings toward persons, whom they had converted to Christianity, and did admit to a participation of the privileges thereof, that no other faith was by them required in order thereto: upon

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John viii.  
31, 32;  
v. 24;  
xx. 31;  
vi. 47;  
iii. 36;  
xv. 16.  
Col. ii. 12.  
Rom. x. 9;  
x. 10.

- SERM.** such a persuasion appearing, they received them  
**IV.** into the Church, baptized them, pronounced unto them an absolution from their sins, and a reception into God's favour. This was the faith of Martha, which gave her interest in the promise of eternal life: *Every one, said our Saviour to her, living, and believing in me, shall never die: Dost thou believe this? She saith unto him, Yes, Lord, I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.* This was the faith, for which our Saviour commends St Peter, and pronounces him happy. Upon appearance of this faith, St Peter baptized and admitted into the Church the three thousand persons whom he had converted: *Then, says the text, they who gladly (or willingly) received his word, οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀποδεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον, (that is, were persuaded of the truth of that doctrine, which is before set down concerning our Lord) were baptized; and the same day were added (to the Church) about three thousand souls.* Upon the like faith the Samaritans were baptized, *ὅτε ἐπίστευσαν τῷ Φιλίππῳ, viii. 12; When they gave credence to Philip's doctrine.* And upon the same account did the same Evangelist say it was lawful to baptize the Eunuch, and accordingly did perform it: *If, saith Philip, thou believest with thy whole heart, it is lawful, (or thou mayest be baptized). He answering said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* So he baptized him. This was the faith, upon which St Paul baptized Lydia, when she had yielded assent unto **xvi. 14, 15;** (so *προσέχειν* doth import in the Acts; not only *προσέχειν νοῦν* to yield attention, but *προσέχειν πίστιν* to give assent unto) the things spoken by

St Paul. Thus also of those Jews, in another place of the Acts, when St Paul had opened and alleged, out of the Scriptures, that Christ was to suffer, Act. xvii. 3, 4. and to rise again from the dead, and that Jesus was the Christ, it is said, *τινὲς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίσθησαν, καὶ προσεκληρώθησαν, Some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas, (that is, were received into Christian communion with them).*

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The same is intimated in other passages of the Apostolical history; by all which it appears, that the Apostles' method was to declare and inculcate Acts ix. 20; xvi. 32; xvii. 11, 12.

the main points of the Christian history and doctrine, attesting to the one, and proving the other by testimonies and arguments proper to that purpose; and whoever of their hearers declared himself persuaded of the truth of what they taught, that he did heartily assent thereto, and resolved to profess and practise accordingly, him, without more to do, they presently baptized, and instated him in the privileges appertaining to Christianity; or, in St Paul's language, did justify them, according to their subordinate manner, as the ministers of God. And thus did the primitive Church practise after the Apostles; as Justin the Martyr fully relates of it<sup>d</sup>:—*Ὅσοι ἂν πεισθῶσι, καὶ πιστεύουσιν ἀληθῆ ταῦτα τὰ ὑφ' ἡμῶν διδασκόμενα καὶ λεγόμενα εἶναι, καὶ βιοῦν οὕτως δύνασθαι ὑπισχνῶνται—ἄγονται ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἐνθα ὕδωρ ἐστὶ, καὶ τρόπον ἀναγεννήσεως, ὃν καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ ἀνεγεννήθημεν, ἀναγεννῶνται. Whoever, saith he, are persuaded, and do believe these things by us taught, and said to be true, and undertake that they can live so according to them;—are brought thither, where water is, and are regenerated after*

<sup>d</sup> Apol. 1. [cap. 61. Opp. p. 82 B.]

SERM. *the same manner as we have been regenerated.* I  
 IV. further add, that even this faith is expressed to be  
 Matt. xvi. the effect of Divine grace and inspiration; for  
 16, 17. when St Peter had confessed, that Jesus was the  
 1 Cor. xii. Christ, the Son of the living God, our Saviour  
 3; ii. 10. tells him, that flesh and blood had not revealed  
 2 Cor. iv. that unto him, but his Father in heaven; and, *No*  
 6. *man*, St Paul tells us, *can call Jesus Lord, but by*  
 2 Pet. i. 19. *the Holy Ghost*: and, *Every spirit, which confesseth*  
 1 John iv. *Jesus Christ to have been come in the flesh, is of*  
 2. *God*, saith St John. So that even this is a faith,  
 2 Cor. iv. in respect to which the Holy Ghost is called the  
 13. Spirit of faith, which is the fruit of the Spirit, and  
 Gal. v. 22. the gift of God; that which no man can have  
 Eph. ii. 8. without God's drawing him, and teaching him;  
 Phil. i. 29. *No man can come unto me, except the Father, that*  
 John vi. *hath sent me, shall draw him* (ἐλκύσῃ αὐτόν): *Every*  
 44, 45. *one that hath heard from the Father, and hath*  
*learned, cometh unto me*: to which it is ordinarily  
 required, that God should open the heart, as he  
 Acts xvi. did Lydia's heart, to attend and assent unto what  
 14. St Paul taught: neither doth the Scripture, as I  
 conceive, attribute any thing unto faith, which  
 doth not agree to this notion.

We might lastly adjoin, that this was the common and current notion of faith among the ancient Christians; neither do we, I suppose, meet with any other in their writings; all which things do abundantly confirm the truth thereof.

5 But I must further observe particularly, (in correspondence to what was before more generally observed,) that this faith doth not only denote precisely and abstractedly such acts of mind, such opinions and persuasions concerning the truth of

matters specified, but doth also connote<sup>e</sup> and imply SERM.  
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(indeed comprehend according to the meaning of those who use the word) such acts of will, as, supposing those persuasions to be real and complete, are naturally consequent upon them, and are in a manner necessarily coherent with them; a firm resolution constantly to profess and adhere unto the doctrine, of which a man is so persuaded; to obey all the laws and precepts, which it contains; forsaking in open profession, and in real practices, all principles, rules, customs inconsistent with those doctrines and laws; that which is called conversion, or returning to the Lord, (that is, leaving a course of rebellion, and disobedience to those laws, which the Lord in the Gospel commands, and resolvedly betaking themselves to the observance of them:)

πολὺς τε ἀριθμὸς πιστεύσας ἐπέστρεψεν ἐπὶ τὸν Κύριον, Acts xi. 21; ix. 35;  
A great multitude, it is said, believing, did return xiv. 15;  
unto the Lord; their faith did carry with it such a xxvi. 18;  
conversion. Hence this faith is styled πειθαρχεῖν v. 32.  
Θεῷ, to obey God's command; ὑπακούειν τῷ εὐαγγ. 1 Thess. i. 8.  
γελίῳ, to obey the Gospel; ὑπακούειν τῇ πίστει, to Rom. i. 6;  
obey the faith; ὑποταγή τῆς ὁμολογίας εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέ- vi. 17;  
λιον, subjection of professing the Gospel of Christ, xvi. 19.  
with purpose of heart to adhere unto God; Stipula- 2 Cor. ix. 13.  
tion of a good conscience toward God, (that which Acts xi. 23.  
St Peter intimates, as a necessary concomitant of 1 Pet. iii. 21.  
Baptism, it being a sincere undertaking, and engaging one's self to obey God's commandments;) in fine, to repent; which is either adequately the same

<sup>e</sup> Nam cum, ut diximus, hoc sit hominis Christiani fides, fideliter Christum credere, et hoc sit Christum fideliter credere, Christi mandata servare, fit absque dubio, ut nec fidem habeat qui infidelis est, nec Christum credat qui Christi mandata conculcat.—Salv. de Gubern. Dei, Lib. iv. [p. 63. ed. Baluz.]



- SERM.** thing with faith, or included therein, according to  
**IV.** the apostolical meaning of the word; for that re-  
 mission of sins, which is sometime made the conse-  
 quent of faith, is elsewhere expressly annexed to  
 repentance: the sum of the Gospel our Saviour him-  
 Luke xxiv. self expresses by the preaching in his name *Repent-*  
 47. *ance, and remission of sins in all nations:* and,  
 Acts ii. 38; *Repent, St Peter preached, and let every one of you*  
 iii. 19; *be baptized:* and, *Repent,* said he again, *and re-*  
 xvii. 30; *turn, that your sins may be blotted out:* and, *Then*  
 xi. 18; *to the Gentiles,* say those in the Acts, *hath God*  
*given repentance unto life;* which signifies the same  
 xv. 9. *persons, God's having purified their hearts by faith;*  
 in which places I take repentance to import the  
 same thing with faith; being in effect nothing else,  
 but sincere embracing Christian Religion. Now the  
 word faith is thus extended (beyond its natural  
 and primary force) to comprehend such a com-  
 pliance of will, or purpose of obedience, because  
 this doth naturally arise from a persuasion con-  
 cerning the truth of the Gospel, if it be real and  
 strong enough, in that degree, which Christianity  
 requires, and supposes to the effects mentioned in  
 the Gospel; if it be *ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, in the heart,* (or  
 Rom. x. 9. a hearty faith,) as St Paul speaks; if it be such  
 Acts viii. as Philip exacts of the Eunuch, a belief *ἐξ ὅλης*  
 37. *τῆς καρδίας, from the whole heart;* if it have that  
 Heb. x. 22, *τῆς καρδίας, from the whole heart;* if it have that  
 23; vi. 17, due plerophory, that stability, that solidity, which  
 12. the Apostles speak of; for a weak, faint, slight,  
 1 Thess. i. ill-grounded, ill-rooted opinion concerning the  
 5. truth of the Gospel, (such as those in another  
 Col. i. 23; case had, whom our Saviour rebuked with a, *τί*  
 ii. 5, 7; *δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι; Why are ye fearful, O ye*  
 iv. 12. *δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι;* *Why are ye fearful, O ye*  
 2 Cor. viii. *δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι;* *Why are ye fearful, O ye*  
 7. *δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι;* *Why are ye fearful, O ye*  
 Matt. viii. *δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι;* *Why are ye fearful, O ye*  
 26;

small in faith? such as St Peter had, when our Saviour said to him, ὀλιγόπιστε, εἰς τί ἐδίστασας; SERM. IV. Matt. xiv. 31;  
*O thou of small faith, why didst thou doubt?* which faith could not keep them nor him from sinking; not such as those had, who heard the word, and gladly received it; but wanted root, so that, when persecution or affliction did arise for the word, they were presently scandalized; not such a faith as those many rulers had, who are said to have believed in Jesus, but for fear of the Pharisees did not confess him; not such as Simon Magus had, who is said to have believed Philip, but to no good effect, because his heart was not right before God; he having not thoroughly resolved to obey the Gospel; not such as Agrippa had, whom St Paul had almost persuaded to be a Christian)—these sorts of faith are, in comparison to that we speak of, but equivocally so called: it includes a firm resolution to perform carefully all the duties enjoined to Christians, to undergo patiently all the crosses incident to Christianity; it is the same with becoming a disciple of Christ, which a man cannot be without renouncing all other interests and concerns, without denying one's self, forsaking all and following him; without taking his yoke upon him, going after, and bearing his cross; it supposes (as our Saviour also teaches us) that a man hath cast up with himself the gain and loss he is like to receive by the bargain, and being satisfied therein, to contract *bona fide* with God; that a man hath weighed all the pains and dangers he shall be put upon by entering into this warfare, and so resolvedly to adventure upon it; it is productive of love to the truth, yea of love to

SERM. IV.

Matt. xiv. 31;

xiii. 20.

John xii. 42.

Acts viii. 13, 21;

xxvi. 28.

Matt. x. 38; xi. 29. Luke ix. 23;

xiv. 26, 27. Matt. xiii. 44, 45.

Luke xiv. 28, 31.

2 Thess. ii. 10.

SERM.  
IV.1 Cor. xiii.  
2.  
Gal. v. 6.

God, and charity to men, without which all faith is unprofitable and ineffectual, as St Paul teaches us. In short, this faith is nothing else but a true, serious, resolute embracing Christianity; not only being persuaded that all the doctrines of Christ are true, but submitting to his will and command in all things<sup>f</sup>.

6 But to prevent mistakes, and remove objections, I shall yet further observe,

2 Cor. v.  
18, 19.

That this faith hath, although not an adequate, yet a peculiar respect unto that part of Christian truth, which concerns the merciful intentions of God toward mankind, and the gracious performances of our Saviour in order to the accomplishing them; the promises of pardon to our sins, and restoral into God's favour upon the terms propounded in the Gospel, of sincere faith and repentance; whence the Gospel is called *ὁ λόγος τῆς καταλλαγῆς*, *The word of reconciliation*; and this is expressed as a summary of the Apostolic ministry or message; that, *God was in Christ reconciling the*

Luke xxiv.  
47.

*world, not imputing their sins*: and this our Saviour did order in especial manner to be preached in his name; this accordingly they did mainly propound

Acts v. 31;

and inculcate; that, *God had exalted Jesus to his right hand as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins*; That

x. 43;

*he should receive remission of sins, whoever did believe in his name*; Let it be known unto you, brethren,

xiii. 38.

*that by this man remission of sins is denounced*

(*καταγγέλλεται*) *unto you*: so did they preach.

Rom. iii.  
25.

Whence this faith is (*signanter*) called belief in

<sup>f</sup> Credere se in Christum quomodo dicit, qui non facit quod Christus facere præcepit?—Cypr. de Unit. Eccl. [Opp. p. 194.]

the blood of Christ: indeed, of all Christian doctrines, this is most proper first to be propounded and persuaded, as the most attractive to the belief of the rest; most encouraging and comfortable to men; most apt to procure glory to God by the illustration of his principal attributes, his justice and his goodness; most suitable to the state of things between God and man: for men being in a state of rebellion and enmity toward God, in order to their reducement and recovery thence, it was most proper, that in the first place an overture of mercy and pardon should be made, an act of oblivion should be passed and propounded to them: yet are not these propositions and promises the adequate or entire object of this faith; for other articles of faith are often propounded in a collateral order with those; yea sometimes (as in the case of the Eunuch) others are expressed, when that is not mentioned, but only understood: neither if any one should believe all the doctrines of that kind, if he did not withal believe that Jesus is his Lord, and shall be his Judge; that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, and a judgment to come, with the like fundamental verities of our Religion, would he be a believer in this sense.

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IV.

Rom. iii.  
26;  
xv. 9.  
Eph. i. 6.

Acts viii.  
37.  
Rom. x. 9.

7 I observe further, that this faith doth relate only to propositions revealed by God<sup>s</sup>, (or at least deduced from principles of reason, such as are, that there is a God; that God is good, veracious, and faithful; that our Religion is true in the gross; that the Holy Scriptures were written by Divine

<sup>s</sup> Fides dicit, parata sunt magna et incomprehensibilia dona a Deo fidelibus suis: dicit spes, mihi illa bona servantur; charitas dicit, curro ego ad illa.—Bern.

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inspiration; which propositions we believe upon rational grounds and motives,) not unto other propositions concerning particular matter of fact, subject to private conscience or experience; nor to any conclusions depending upon such propositions. For instance, it is a part of this faith to believe, that God is merciful and gracious, that he bears good-will unto, and is disposed to pardon, every penitent sinner; or (which is all one) that supposing a man doth believe, and hath repented, God doth actually love him, and doth forgive his sins; this is, I say, indeed a part of the faith we speak of, its object being part of the Gospel revealed unto us: but the being persuaded that God doth love me, or hath pardoned my sins, or that I am in a state of favour with God, may, as my circumstances may be, not be my duty; however it is no part of this faith, but a matter of opinion, dependent upon private experience: for such a persuasion must be grounded upon my being conscious to myself of having truly and thoroughly repented, (this being required by God, as a necessary condition toward my obtaining pardon, and his favour;) of having performed which duty I may presume, when it is false, (and therefore cannot then be obliged to believe it,) and may doubt, when it is true; and that not without good reason, considering the blindness and fallibility of man's mind, and that, *Man's heart is deceitful above all things*, as the Prophet tells us: upon which account then a man may not be obliged to have such a persuasion. It is, indeed, a great fault to doubt, or distrust, on that hand which concerns God; about his goodness, his truth, his wisdom, or power: but

Jer. xvii.  
9.

it is not always (perhaps not commonly) blameable SERM. IV. to question a man's own qualifications, or his own performances, whether in kind or degree they be answerable to what God requires<sup>b</sup>; that is inconsistent with true faith, but this not: we cannot have any good religious affections toward God, if we do not take him to be our gracious Father; but we may have in us such affections toward him, and he may be favourably disposed toward us, when we suspect ourselves to be untoward children, unworthy (as the prodigal son in the Gospel confessed himself) to be called the sons of God. Luke xv. 19. The centurion in the Gospel did confess himself unworthy that Christ should enter under his roof: Matt. viii. 8, 10; but he declared his persuasion, that if Christ should only speak a word, his servant should be healed; and our Saviour thereupon professes, that he had not found so much faith in Israel. To the blind men imploring his relief, our Saviour puts the question, *Do ye believe that I can do this?* *They answered,* ix. 28, 29. *Yes, Lord:* he required no more of them; but said thereupon, *According to your faith let it be done unto you.* Vid. Matt. xv. 28. And that for which Abraham the father of believers his faith is represented so acceptable is, his firm persuasion concerning God's power; *Because, saith St Paul, he had a plerophory, (πληροφωρεῖς,) that what was promised, God was able to perform;* by doing thus, he was a believer, and Rom. iv. 20, 21. Heb. xi. 19. thereby gave glory to God, as the Apostle there adds. If we do not then distrust God, we may

<sup>b</sup> *Qui perseveraverit usque ad finem, hic salvus erit; quicquid ante finem fuerit, gradus est, quo ad fastigium salutis ascenditur, non terminus, quo jam culminis summa teneatur. &c.—Cypr. de Unit. Eccl. [Opp. p. 201.]*

SERM. have faith, although we distrust ourselves. It is  
 IV. true (generally and absolutely speaking) we should  
 endeavour so fully and clearly to repent, and to  
 Col. i. 23. perform whatever God requires of us, that we may  
 Heb. iii. 6. thence acquire a good hope concerning our state;  
 1 John iii. we should labour, that our hearts may not con-  
 21. demn us of any presumptuous transgressing our  
 duty, and consequently, that we may become in a  
 manner confident of God's favour toward us: but  
 when we have done the best we can, even when  
 we are not conscious of any enormous fault or  
 1 Cor. iv. defect, yet we may consider with St Paul, that we  
 4. are not thereby justified, but abide liable to the  
 more certain cognizance and judgment of God,  
 1 Sam. xvi. *Who seeth not as man seeth*; that we are not  
 7. capable, or competent judges of ourselves; nor are  
 ever the better for thinking well of ourselves;  
 2 Cor. x. since, as St Paul tells us again, *He is not approved*  
 18. *that commends himself, but whom the Lord com-*  
 Ps. xix. 12. *mendeth*: for that, *Delicta sua quis intelligit?*  
*Who can thoroughly understand and scan his own*  
 Prov. xx. *errors? Who can say, I have made my heart clean,*  
 9. *I am purged of my sin?* Who can know, (if the  
 Psalmist implieth that he could not,) until God  
 Ps. cxxxix. hath searched him, and discovers it, whether there  
 24. be any secret way of wickedness in him; whether  
 he be sufficiently grieved for having offended God,  
 fully humbled under the sense of his sins, thoroughly  
 resolved to amend his life? However, it often  
 happens, that true faith and sincere repentance are  
 in degree very defective; in which case we may,  
 without prejudicing the truth of our faith, suspect  
 the worst<sup>1</sup>; yea, I conceive it is more safe and

Rom. xi.  
20.

<sup>1</sup> Μη ὑψηλοφρόνει, ἀλλὰ φοβοῦ.—Rom. xi. 20

commendable so to do<sup>k</sup>: if in any, then chiefly, SERM. IV.  
 I suppose, in this most important and critical  
 affair, the Wise Man's sentence doth hold, *Blessed* Prov. xxviii. 14.  
*is he that feareth always*; so feareth, as thereby 2 Pet. i. 10.  
 to become more solicitous and watchful over his  
 heart and ways; more careful and studious of  
 securing his salvation finally, to render his calling  
 and election in the event more firm, and in his  
 apprehension more hopeful. I dare say, of two  
 persons otherwise alike qualified, he that upon this  
 ground (fearing his own unworthiness, or the defect  
 of his performances) is most doubtful of his state,  
 doth stand really upon better terms with God<sup>l</sup>;  
 as the Pharisee, who justified himself, and took  
 himself to be in a very good condition, was, indeed,  
 less justified (somewhat the less for that conceit of Luke xviii. 14; x. 29.  
 his) than the poor publican, who was sensible of  
 his own unworthiness, and condemned himself in  
 his own opinion: the great danger lies on that  
 hand of being presumptuous, arrogant, and self-  
 conceited, which God hates; and on this hand  
 there usually lies humility, modesty, and poverty  
 of spirit, which God loves. As every high thing Luke xvi. 15;  
 (every elevation of mind) is abominable in God's xviii. 14.  
 sight, and he depresseth him that exalteth himself; 2 Sam. xxii. 28.  
 so lowly thoughts are gracious in God's regard; he Ps. xxxiv. 18.  
 raiseth him that humbleth himself, and is lowly in  
 his own eyes: he hath an especial respect to him Isai. lxvi. 2; lvii. 15.  
 that is of a poor and contrite heart, and trembleth  
 at his word. It is a property of good men, (being

<sup>k</sup> Nunquam est de salute propria mens segura sapientia. — Salv.  
 ad Eccl. Cath. lib. ii. [adv. Avar. ii. p. 242. Ed. Baluz.]

<sup>l</sup> Quem censeas digniorem, nisi emendatiorem? quem emenda-  
 tiorem, nisi timidiorem, et idcirco vera poenitentia functum? —  
 Tertull. de Pœnit. cap. vi. [Opp. p. 125 c.]



SERM. such as often reflect upon their own hearts and  
IV. ways, and thence discern the defects in them,)

Gen. xxxii. with Jacob, to think themselves less than the  
10. least of God's mercies; with David, to be afraid  
Ps. cxix. of God's judgments; it is their duty to pass the  
120. time of their sojourning here in fear, to work out  
Phil. ii. 12. their salvation with fear and trembling. I may  
1 Pet. i. 17. add, that sometime a person much loving God,  
2 Pet. i. 10. and much beloved of him, may be like a pelican  
Ps. cii. 6; of the wilderness, and an owl of the desert; from  
xxxviii. 3; an apprehension of God's anger, may have no  
cxliii. 4. soundness in his flesh, nor rest in his bones, by  
reason of his sin; may have his spirit overwhelmed,  
and his heart within him desolate; may fear that  
Jer. v. 25. his sins have separated between him and his God;  
Ps. xxii. 1; and that he is forsaken of God; God hiding his  
xxx. 7; face, and withdrawing the light of his countenance,  
lxxxix. 46; he may be troubled, may have his soul cast down,  
xlii. 5; and disquieted within him; may be ready to say,  
lxix. 16; *I am cut off from before thine eyes*: even such a  
xxxi. 22. man, in such a state of distress and doubt, may con-  
tinue a believer; he retaining honourable thoughts  
of God, (in which the worth and virtue of true  
faith consisteth,) although dejected by the con-  
science of his own infirmities, by suspicion of his  
own indispositions, and consequently by the fear  
of God's displeasure.

Further, that this faith doth not essentially in-  
clude a respect to such particular propositions, or  
does not (as many in these two latter ages have  
deemed and taught) consist in our being persuaded,  
that our sins are pardoned, or our persons just in  
God's esteem<sup>m</sup>; that we are acceptable to God,

<sup>m</sup> Sed fide hoc beneficium accipiendum est, qua credere nos

and stand possessed of his favour, appears from SERM.  
IV. hence, that faith is in Holy Scripture represented in nature precedaneous to God's benevolence, (especial I mean, not general benevolence, for that prevents all acts and dispositions of us, or in us,) to his conferring remission of sins, accepting and justifying our persons; it is a previous condition, without which (as the Apostle teaches us) *It is im-* Heb. xi. 6.  
*possible to please God*; it is a reason of God's love, *The Father, saith our Lord, loves you, because ye* John xvi.  
*have loved me, and believed that I came from God;* <sup>27.</sup> it is a ground of Divine acceptation and good-will, *Abraham believed God, saith St James, and it was* James ii.  
*accounted unto him for righteousness, and he was* <sup>23.</sup> *called the friend of God*; it is a mean, or instrument, (so it is constantly represented,) by which we are justified, obtain God's favour, and the remission of our sins; and therefore is in order of nature previous and prerequisite thereto; it is therefore required before baptism, in which remission of sins is consigned: God justifies, accepts, and pardons him, that hath been impious, but not him that is an infidel. This is the method plainly declared in Scripture; wherefore if faith implies a persuasion that God hath remitted our sins, it must imply an antecedent faith, (even a justifying faith, antecedent to itself,) or that we believe before we believe, and are justified before we are justified. I add,

oportet, quod propter Christum nobis donentur remissio peccatorum et justificatio.—Conf. Aug. [de Fide.]

Quare cum dicit, Justificamur fide, vult te intueri filium Dei sedentem ad dextram Patris, Mediatorem, interpellantem pro nobis, et statuere, quod tibi remittantur peccata; quod justus, id est acceptus reputeris.—Melanch. Loc. Com. [de Vocab. Fidei, p. 215. Ed. Basil. 1552.]

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that by this notion many, or most (I will not, after the Council of Trent, say all) humble and modest Christians are excluded from being believers; even all those who are not confident of their own sincerity and sanctity, and consequently cannot be assured of their standing in God's favour: and on the other side, the most presumptuous and fanatical sort of people are most certainly the truest and strongest believers, as most partaking of the most essential property thereof, according to that notion; for of all men living, such are wont to be most assured of God's especial love unto them, and confident that their sins are pardoned: experience sufficiently shews this to be true, and consequently that such a notion of faith cannot be good.

Much less is that notion of faith right, which defines faith to be a firm and certain knowledge of God's eternal good-will toward us particularly, and that we shall be saved; which notion (taught in the beginning of the Reformation, by a man of greatest name and authority<sup>n</sup>) was thus lately expressed by the Professors of Leyden in their *Synopsis purioris Theologiæ: Faith* (they say in their definition thereof) *is a firm assent—by which every believer, with a certain trust resting in God, is persuaded not only that remission of sins is in general promised to them who believe, but is granted to himself particularly, and eternal righteousness, and*

<sup>n</sup> Nunc justa fidei definitio nobis constabit, si dicamus esse divinæ erga nos benevolentiae firmam certamque cognitionem, &c. —Calv. Inst. [Lib. iii. cap. ii. § 7. Opp. Tom. ix. p. 142.]

Jam in divina benevolentia quam respicere dicitur fides, intelligimus salutis ac vitæ æternæ possessionem obtineri. &c.—[Ibid. § 28. p. 148.]

from it life, by the mercy of God, &c.<sup>o</sup> Which notion seems to be very uncomfortable, as rejecting every man from the company of believers, who is either ignorant or doubtful, not only concerning his present, but his final state; who hath not, not only a good opinion, but a certain knowledge of his present sincerity and sanctity; yea, not only of this, but of his future constant perseverance therein; so that if a man be not sure he hath repented, he is (according to this notion) sure that he hath not repented, and is no believer. How many good people must this doctrine discourage and perplex! To remove it we may consider,

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1 That it altogether inverts and confounds the order of things declared in Scripture, wherein faith (as we observed before) is set before obtaining God's good-will, as a prerequisite condition thereto; and is made a means of salvation, (*Without faith it is impossible to please God: By grace we are saved, through faith*). And if we must believe, before God loves us, (with such a love as we speak of,) and before we can be saved; then must we know that we believe, before we can know, that God loves us, or that we shall be saved; and consequently we must, indeed, believe before we can know, that God loves us, or that we shall be saved. But this doctrine makes the knowledge of God's love and of salvation in nature antecedent to faith, as being an essential ingredient into it; which is preposterous. Consider this circle of discourse: a man

Heb. xi. 6.  
Eph. ii. 8.  
Rom. x. 9.

<sup>o</sup> Firmus assensus—quo certa fiducia in Deo acquiescens firmiter unusquisque fidelis statuit, non solum promissum esse credentibus in genere remissionem peccatorum, sed sibi in particulari concessum, æternamque justitiam, et ex ea vitam, &c.

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James ii.  
23.

John xvii.  
3, 8.

2 Pet. i.  
10.

cannot know that he believes, without he does believe; this is certain: a man cannot know that he shall be saved, without knowing he doth believe; this is also certain: for upon what ground, from what evidence can he know his salvation, but by knowing his faith? But again backward: a man, say they, cannot believe (and consequently not know that he believes) without being assured of his salvation. What an inextricable maze and confusion is here! This doctrine, indeed, doth make the knowledge of a future event to be the cause of its being future; it supposes God to become our friend (as Abraham was by his faith) by our knowing that he is our friend; it makes us to obtain a reward by knowing that we shall obtain it; it supposes the assurance of our coming to a journey's end, to be the way of getting thither; which who can conceive intelligible, or true? Our Saviour doth, indeed, tell us, that it is the way to life everlasting (or conducive to the attaining it) to know (that is, to believe, as it is interpreted in the 8th verse of that chapter; for what upon good grounds we are persuaded of, or judge true, we may be said to know) the true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent: but he doth not say, it is life everlasting (or conducive to the obtaining it) to know, that we shall have life everlasting; that were somewhat strange to say. St Peter exhorts us to use diligence to make our calling and election sure, (or firm, and stable:) but he doth not bid us know it to be sure. If we did know it to be so, what need should we have to make it so? yea, how could we make it so? He doth not enjoin us to be sure of it in our opinion, but to secure it in the event by

sincere obedience, and a holy life ; by so impressing this persuasion upon our minds, so rooting the love of God and his truth in our hearts, that no temptation may be able to subvert our faith, or to pluck out our charity.

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2 This notion plainly supposes the truth of that doctrine, that no man being once in God's favour, can ever quite lose it ; the truth of which I shall not contest now, (nor allege the many clear passages of Scripture, nor the whole tenor of the Gospel, nor the unanimous consent of all Christendom for fifteen hundred years against it,) but shall only take notice, that their notion of faith, necessarily presupposing the truth of this doctrine, is yet thereby everted : for it follows thence, that no man, who doth not assent to that doctrine, is, or can be a believer ; for he that is not assured of the truth of that opinion (although we suppose him assured of his present sincerity, and being in a state of grace) cannot know that he shall be saved : so that only such as agree with them in that opinion can be believers, which is somewhat hard, or rather very absurd. And to aggravate this inconvenience, I adjoin,

3 That, according to their notion, scarce any man, (except some have had an especial revelation concerning their salvation,) before the late alterations in Christendom, was a believer ; for before that time it hardly appears, that any man did believe, as they do, that a man cannot fall from grace ; and therefore scarce any man could be assured, that he should be saved ; and therefore scarce any man could be a believer in their sense.

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St Augustine himself (whose supposed patronage stands them in so much stead upon other occasions<sup>p</sup>) hath often affirmed, that divers have had given them that faith, that charity, that justification, wherein if they had died, they should have been saved ; who yet were not saved : which persons surely, when they were in that good state, (admitting them, according to St Augustine's supposal, to have been in it,) were as capable of knowing their salvation, as any other man can be ; yea, St Augustine himself (considering that, *Accidere cuicumque quod potest, cuivis potest*, what was another man's case might be his, there being no ground of difference) could not be more sure of his own salvation at any time, than such persons were at that time : according to St Augustine's judgment therefore, no man could know that he should be saved, (his salvation depending upon perseverance, which in his opinion not being given to all, must as to our knowledge, whatever it might be in respect to God's decree, be contingent and uncertain)—it follows, I say, upon his suppositions, yea he expressly affirms it ; *Itaque*, says he, *utrum quisque hoc (perseverantiæ) munus acceperit, quamdiu hanc vitam ducit, incertum est*<sup>q</sup>. *Whether any have received this gift of perseverance while he*

<sup>p</sup> De Corr. et Gr. capp. ix. xiii. De Don. Persev. capp. viii. xiii.

<sup>q</sup> De Don. Persev. cap. i. [Opp. Tom. x. col. 821 A.]

Nec sibi quisque ita notus est, ut sit de sua crastina conversatione securus.—Aug. [Ep. cxxx. ad Probam, Opp. Tom. ii. col. 384 B.]

In hoc mundo, et in hac vita nulla anima possit esse secura.—Id. ibid. [col. 383 B.]

Quamdiu vivimus, in certamine sumus ; et quamdiu in certamine, nulla certa est victoria.—Hier. adv. Pelag. ii. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 514.]

leads this life, is uncertain. Wherefore St Augustine could not be assured of his own salvation; and therefore (according to these men's sense) he was no believer, no Christian; which I suppose yet they will not assert, though it be so plainly consequent on their own position. SERM.  
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4 I might ask of them, if a man should confess ingenuously, that although he did hope for mercy from God in that day, yet that he was not assured of his salvation, whether such a person should be rejected from Christian communion, as no believer. It seems, according to their notion of faith, he should; since by his own (in this particular, infallible) judgment, it is notorious that he, as being no believer, hath no title unto, or interest in, the privileges of Christianity: but this proceeding would very much depopulate the Church, and banish from it, I fear, the best (the most humble and modest, yea, the wisest and soberest) members thereof.

But so much I think suffices for the removal of that new harsh notion, to say no worse of it.

There is another more new than that, devised by some<sup>r</sup>, (who perceived the inconveniences of the former notions, yet, it seems, did affect to substitute some new fine one in their room;) which, if it be not so plainly false, yet is, it seems, more obscure

<sup>r</sup> Vid. Ames. Medull. Theol. Lib. I. cap. xxvii. [§ 17. p. 140. Fides igitur illa proprie dicitur justificans, qua incumbimus in Christum ad remissionem peccatorum et salutem. Christus enim est adequatum objectum fidei, quatenus fides justificat. Fides enim non alia ratione justificat, nisi quatenus apprehendit illam justitiam, propter quam justificamur; illa autem justitia non est in veritate alicujus axiomatis, cui assensum præbemus, sed in Christo solo, *Qui factus est pro nobis peccatum, ut nos essemus in ipso justitia.*—(2 Cor. v. 21.)]



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and intricate: it is this; that faith is not an assent to propositions of any kind, but a recumbency, leaning, resting, rolling upon, adherency to (for they express themselves in these several terms, and others like them) the person of Christ; or, an apprehending and applying to ourselves the righteousness of Christ; his person itself, and his righteousness, as simple incomplex things; not any proposition (that they expressly caution against) are the objects, say they, of our faith: they compare our faith to a hand that lays hold upon Christ, and applies his righteousness; and to an eye that looks upon him, and makes him present to us; and by looking on him (as on the brasen serpent) cures us. But this notion is so intricate, these phrases are so unintelligible, that I scarce believe the devisers of them did themselves know what they meant by them; I do not, I am sure: for what it is for one body to lean upon, or to be rolled on another; what for one body to reach at, and lay hold upon another; what it is to apply a garment to one's body, or a salve to one's wounds, I can easily understand: but what it is for a man's mind to lean upon a person, (otherwise than by assenting unto some proposition he speaks, or relying upon some promise he makes,) to apply a thing, otherwise than by consenting to some proposition concerning that thing, I cannot apprehend, or reach; there is not, as we noted before, any faculty or operation of a man's mind, which answers the intent of such notions or phrases. Let me put this case: Suppose a great province had generally revolted from its sovereign, whereby the people thereof had all deserved extreme punishment suitable to such an

offence; but that the king, moved with pity, and upon the intercession of his only beloved son, (together with a satisfaction offered and performed by him,) should resolve to grant a general pardon to them, upon just, and fit, and withal very easy terms; and that, for the execution of this gracious purpose toward them, he should depute and send his son himself among them to treat with them, by him declaring his merciful intentions toward them, with the conditions, upon compliance wherewith, all, or any of them, should be pardoned their offence, and received into favour; those conditions being, suppose it, that, first, they should receive and acknowledge his son for such as he professed himself to be, (the king's son, indeed, who truly brought such a message unto them from his majesty;) then, that they should seriously resolve with themselves, and solemnly engage to return unto their due allegiance; undertaking faithfully for ever after to observe those laws, which the said prince in his father's name should propound unto them. Suppose further, that the prince in pursuance of this commission and design, being come into the country, should there send all about officers of his, enjoining them to discover the intent of his coming, what he offered, and upon what terms; withal, empowering them in his name to receive those who complied into favour, declaring them pardoned of all their offences, and restored to the benefit of the king's protection, and all the privileges of loyal subjects: suppose now, that these officers should go to the people, and speak to them in this manner: The king makes an overture of pardon and favour unto you, upon condition, that any one of you will

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recumb, rest, lean upon, or roll himself upon the person of his son, (rest upon his person, not only rely upon his word, that you are to understand,) or in case you will lay hold upon and apply to yourselves his son's righteousness, by which he hath procured of the king his father this mercy and favour for you, (not only being persuaded, that he hath performed thus much for you, this is not enough;) do you think these messengers should thus well express themselves, or perform their message handsomely and with advantage? Should not they do much better, laying aside such words of metaphor and mystery, to speak in plain language; telling them, that their king's son (by plain characters discernible to be truly such) was come among them upon such an intention; that if they would acknowledge him, and undertake thereafter to obey him, they should receive a full pardon, with divers other great favours and advantages thereby? The case is apparently so like to that which stands between God and man, and doth so fully resemble the nature of the evangelical dispensation, that I need not make any application, or use any more argument to refute that notion: I shall only say, that I conceive these new phrases, for such they are, not known to ancient Christians, nor delivered, either in terms or sense, in Scripture; for the places alleged in favour or proof of them by Ames<sup>s</sup>, one of the first broachers of them, (all, we may presume, that they could find anywise

\* [Hinc toties illæ in N. T. repetitæ conciones, quæ justificationem in persona sola Christi quærendam ostendunt. Joh. i. 12; iii. 15, 16, vi. 40, 47, xiv. 1; Rom. iv. 5, iii. 26; Act. x. 43, xxvi. 18; Gal. iii. 26.—Medull. Theol. Lib. i. cap. 27. § 18. p. 140.]

seeming to favour their notion,) do not, as, if time would permit, might easily be shewed, import any such thing, but are strangely misapplied; that, I say, these phrases do much obscure the nature of this great duty, and make the state of things in the Gospel more difficult and dark than it truly is; and thereby seem to be of bad consequence, being apt to beget in people both dangerous presumptions and sad perplexities: for they hearing, that they are only, or mainly bound to have such a recumbency upon Christ, or to make such an application of his righteousness, they begin (accordingly as they take themselves to be directed) to work their minds to it; and when they have hit upon that posture of fancy, which they guess to suit their teachers' meaning, then they become satisfied, and conceit they believe well, although perhaps they be ignorant of the principles of the Christian faith, and indisposed to obey the precepts of our Lord: sometimes, on the other side, although they well understand, and are persuaded concerning the truth of all necessary Christian doctrines, and are well disposed to observe God's commandments, yet because they cannot tell whether they apprehend Christ's person dexterously, or apply to themselves his righteousness in the right manner, as is prescribed to them, (of which it is no wonder that they should doubt, since it is so hard to know what the doing so means,) they become disturbed and perplexed in their minds; questioning whether they do believe or no: thus by these notions (or phrases rather) are some men tempted fondly to presume, and other good people are wofully discouraged by them; both being thence diverted, or

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withdrawn from their duty: whereas what it is to believe, as Christians anciently did understand it, and as we have assayed to explain it, is very easy to conceive; and the taking it so, can have no other than very good influence upon practice, as both reason (as we have insinuated) shews, and the Scripture largely and plainly affirms. But let thus much suffice for the inquiry concerning the genuine nature and notion of faith proper to this place, (that faith by which in this text we are said to be justified:) the other particulars I cannot so much as touch upon at this time.

I end with those good prayers of our Church:

5th Sun-  
day after  
Easter.

*O Lord, from whom all good things do come; grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good; and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

14th Sun-  
day after  
Trinity.

*Almighty and everlasting Lord, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Ἰ Βελίεβε, &c.

## SERMON V.

### OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

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ROM. V. 1.

*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with  
God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

IN order to the understanding of these words, I SERM.  
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did formerly propound divers particulars to be considered and discussed: the first was, What that faith is, by which Christians are said to be justified? This I have despatched: the next is, What justification doth import? The which I shall now endeavour to explain; and I am concerned to perform it with the more care and diligence, because the right notion of this term hath in latter times been canvassed with so much vehemence of dissension and strife.

In former times, among the Fathers and the Schoolmen, there doth not appear to have been any difference or debate about it; because, as it seems, men commonly having the same apprehensions about the matters, to which the word is applicable, did not so much examine or regard the strict propriety of expression concerning them: consenting in things, they did not fall to cavil and contend about the exact meaning of words\*. They did,

\* Περὶ λεξειδίων μικρολογεῖν.—Greg. Naz.

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indeed, consider distinctly no such point of doctrine as that of Justification, looking upon that word as used incidentally in some places of Scripture, for expression of points more clearly expressed in other terms; wherefore they do not make much of the word, as some Divines now do.

But in the beginning of the Reformation, when the discovery of some great errors (from the corruption and ignorance of former times) crept into vogue, rendered all things the subjects of contention, and multiplied controversies, there did arise hot disputes about this point; and the right stating thereof seemed a matter of great importance<sup>b</sup>; nor scarce was any controversy prosecuted with greater zeal and earnestness: whereas yet (so far as I can discern) about the real points of doctrine, whereto this word, according to any sense pretended, may relate, there hardly doth appear any material difference; and all the questions depending chiefly seem to consist about the manner of expressing things, which all agree in; or about the extent of the signification of words capable of larger or stricter acception: whence the debates about this point, among all sober and intelligent persons, might, as I conceive, easily be resolved or appeased, if men had a mind to agree, and did not love to wrangle; if at least a consent in believing the same things, although under some difference of expression, would content them, so as to forbear strife.

To make good which observation, tending as well to the illustration of the whole matter, as to the stating and decision of the controversies about

<sup>b</sup> *Articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae.*—Luther.

it, let us consider the several Divine acts, to which the term Justification is, according to any sense pretended, applicable: I say Divine acts; for that the justification we treat of is an act of God simple or compound (in some manner) respecting, or terminated upon man, is evident, and will not, I suppose, be contested; the words of St Paul in several places so clearly declaring it; as in that, *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; and in that, To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.* Now according to the tenor of Christian doctrine such acts are these.

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Rom. viii.  
33;  
iv. 5;  
iii. 26.

I God (in regard to the obedience performed to his will by his beloved Son, and to his intercession) is so reconciled to mankind, that unto every person, who doth sincerely believe the Gospel, and, repenting of his former bad life, doth seriously resolve thereafter to live according to it, he doth (upon the solemn obsignation of that faith, and profession of that resolution in baptism) entirely remit all past offences, accepting his person, receiving him into favour; assuming him into the state of a loyal subject, a faithful servant, a dutiful son; and bestowing on him all the benefits and privileges suitable to such a state; according to those passages: *It behoved Christ to suffer...and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations: Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins: and, To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name whosoever*

Luke xxiv.  
46, 47.

Acts ii.  
38; iii. 19;  
v. 31;  
x. 43;



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2 Cor. v.  
19.  
Rom. iii.  
24, 25.

*believeth in him shall receive remission of sins: and, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their sins: and in other places innumerable.*

2 As any person persisting in that sincere faith, and serious purpose of obedience, doth assuredly continue in that state of grace, and exemption from the guilt of sin; so in case that, out of human frailty, such a person doth fall into the commission of sin, God (in regard to the same performances and intercessions of his Son) doth, upon the confession and repentance of such a person, remit his sin, and retain him in or restore him to favour; according to those sayings of St John, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness: and, If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

1 John i. 9;  
ii. 1.

3 To each person sincerely embracing the Gospel, and continuing in stedfast adherence thereto, God doth afford his Holy Spirit, as a principle productive of all inward sanctity and virtuous dispositions in his heart, enabling also and quickening him to discharge the conditions of faith and obedience required from him, and undertaken by him; that which is by some termed making a person just, infusion into his soul of righteousness, of grace, of virtuous habits; in the Scripture style it is called acting by the Spirit, bestowing the gift of the Holy Ghost, renovation of the Holy Ghost, creation to good works, sanctification by the Spirit, &c., which phrases denote partly the collation of a principle enabling to perform good works, partly the design of Religion tending to that performance.

Rom. viii.  
14.  
Gal. iv. 6.  
1 Cor. ii.  
12.  
2 Tim. ii.  
7.  
Acts ii. 38.  
Rom. viii.  
9.  
Tit. iii. 5.  
Eph. ii. 22,  
10;  
iv. 23.

Now all these acts (as by the general consent of Christians, and according to the sense of the ancient Catholic Church, so) by all considerable parties seeming to dissent, and so earnestly disputing about the point of justification, are acknowledged and ascribed unto God; but with which of them the act of justification is solely or chiefly coincident; whether it signifieth barely some one of them, or extendeth to more of them, or comprehendeth them all, (according to the constant meaning of the word in Scripture,) are questions coming under debate, and so eagerly prosecuted: of which questions whatever the true resolution be, it cannot methinks be of so great consequence, as to cause any great anger or animosity in dissenters one toward another, seeing they all conspire in avowing the acts, whatever they be, meant by the word justification, although in other terms; seeing all the dispute is about the precise and adequate notion of the word justification: whence those questions might well be waved as unnecessary grounds of contention; and it might suffice to understand the points of doctrine which it relateth to in other terms, laying that aside as ambiguous and litigious. Yet because the understanding the rightest, or most probable notion of the word, may somewhat conduce to the interpretation of the Scriptures, and to clearing the matters couched in it, somewhat also to the satisfaction of persons considerate and peaceable, I shall employ some care faithfully (without partiality to any side) to search it out, and declare it: in order whereto I shall propound some observations, seeming material.

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I. Whereas it were not hard to speak much, and criticise about the primitive sense of the word, and about its various acceptions both in Holy Scripture and other writings, I do question whether doing that would be pertinent or conducive to our purpose of understanding its right notion here: for knowing the primitive sense of words can seldom or never determine their meaning any where, they often in common use declining from it<sup>c</sup>; and the knowing variety of acceptions doth at most yield only the advantage of choosing one suitable to the subjacent matter and occasion. We are not therefore to learn the sense of this word from mere grammarians.

II. The sense of this word is not to be searched in extraneous writers; both because no matter like to that we treat upon did ever come into their use or consideration, and because they do seldom or never use the word in a sense anywise congruous to this matter: in them most commonly the word *δικαίω* doth signify (as the like word *αἰζώω*) to deem a thing just<sup>d</sup>, equal, or fit, (or simply to deem about a thing). Sometimes also, yet not often, as I take it, being applied to an action, or cause, it importeth to make it appear lawful, or just, as when we ordinarily say, to justify what one saith or doth, (whence *δικαίωμα* in Aristotle is an argument proving the justice of a cause, *firmamentum causæ*;) but in them very seldom or never it is applied to persons; and an example, I conceive, can hardly be produced, wherein it is so used.

<sup>c</sup> Verba valent ut nummi.

<sup>d</sup> Ἐδικαίωσαν οἱ πατέρες, ἀπὸ τοῦ δικαίου εἶναι ἔκριναν.—Balsam. in Syn. Chalc. Can. 1. [Comment. in Canon. SS. Apostol. Concil. &c. p. 324 D.]

III. In the sacred writings at large it is commonly applied to persons, and that according to various senses, some more wide and general, some more restrained and particular. It there sometime denoteth generally to exercise any judicial act upon, in regard unto, or in behalf of a person; to do him right, or justice, in declaring the merit of his cause, or pronouncing sentence about him; in acquitting or condemning him from any cause, in obliging him to, or exempting him from any burden, in dispensing to him any reward or punishment indifferently: thus Absalom said, *O that I were made a judge in the land, that every man, which hath any suit or cause, might come unto me,* *וְהִצַּדִּיקְתִּי, καὶ δικαιώσω αὐτόν, and I would justify him,* that is, *I would do him right:* and in the eighty-second Psalm, this charge is given to the princes, or judges; *Defend the poor and fatherless,* *וְהִצַּדִּיקוּ, δικαιώσατε, justify the poor and needy;* that is, *do right and justice to them.* SERM.  
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But more particularly the word signifieth (and that according to the most usual and current acception) so to do a man right, as to pronounce sentence in his favour, as to acquit him from guilt, to excuse him from burden, to free him from punishment; whence we most often meet with the word placed in direct opposition to that of condemnation: as in that law, *If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked:* and in Solomon's prayer, *Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head, and* Deut. xxv.  
1.  
1 Kings  
viii. 32.  
2 Chron.  
vi. 23.

SERM. V. *justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness: and in the Proverbs, He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even both are an abomination unto the Lord: and*  
 Prov. xvii. 15.  
 Matt. xii. 37. *in the Gospel our Saviour saith, By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*  
 Isai. v. 23; xliii. 9.

In consequence upon this sense, and with a little deflection from it, to justify a person sometime denoteth to approve him, or esteem him just, a mental judgment, as it were, being passed upon him: so, *Wisdom* is said to be *justified*, that is, approved, *by her children*: so in the Gospel some persons are said to justify themselves, that is, to conceal themselves righteous: and the Publican went home justified rather than the Pharisee, that is, more approved and accepted by God: so also it is said, that, *All the people and the publicans justified God, being baptized with John's baptism*: they justified God, that is, they declared their approbation of God's proceeding, in the mission of John.

In like manner, justification is taken for exemption from burdens; as where in the Acts St Paul saith, *And from all things, from which by the law of Moses ye could not be justified*, in this is every one that believeth justified.

It may also sometimes be taken for deliverance from punishment; as where in the law God saith, *The innocent and righteous slay thou not; for I will not justify the wicked*; that is, not let him escape with impunity; according to that in the Proverbs, *Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished.*

Acts xiii. 39.

Exod. xxiii. 7.

Prov. xi. 21.

IV. We may observe, that (as every man hath SERM. V. some phrases and particular forms of speech, in which he delighteth, so) this term is somewhat peculiar to St Paul, and hardly by the other Acts xiii. 38; ii. 38; iii. 19; Apostles applied to that matter, which he ex- v. 31; x. 43; xxii. 16. presseth thereby; they usually in their sermons and epistles do speak the same thing, whatever it Luke xxiv. 47. be, in other terms more immediately expressive of the matter. St James, indeed, doth use it, but James ii. 21—25. not so much, it seemeth, according to his usual manner of speech, as occasionally, to refute the false and pestilent conceits of some persons, who mistaking St Paul's expressions and doctrine, did pervert them to the maintenance of Solifidian, Eunomian, and Antinomian positions, greatly prejudicial to good practice. And seeing the term is so proper to St Paul in relation to this matter, the right sense and notion thereof seemeth best derivable from considering the nature of the subject he treateth on, observing the drift of his discourse and manner of his reasoning, comparing the other phrases he useth equivalent to this, and interpretative of his meaning.

V. Following this method of inquiry, I do observe and affirm, that the last notion of the word, as it is evidently most usual in the Scripture, so it best suiteth to the meaning of St Paul here, and elsewhere commonly, where he treateth upon the same matters; that God's justifying solely, or chiefly, doth import his acquitting us from guilt, condemnation, and punishment, by free pardon and remission of our sins, accounting us and dealing with us as just persons, upright and innocent in his sight and esteem: the truth of which notion

SERM. I shall by divers arguments and considerations  
V. make good.

I This sense doth best agree to the nature of the subject-matter, and to the design of St Paul's discourse; which I take to be this; the asserting the necessity, reasonableness, sufficiency, and excellency of the Christian dispensation; in order to that which is the end of all Religion, the bringing men to happiness, and consequently to the rendering men acceptable to God Almighty, who is the sole Author and Donor of happiness: this is that which, in general, he aimeth to assert and maintain.

This, I say, is that which he chiefly driveth at, to maintain, that it is not unreasonable that God should so proceed with men (whose good and felicity, as their gracious Maker, he greatly tendereth) as the Christian Gospel declareth him to do; but that rather such proceeding was necessary and fit, in order to our salvation; and withal conformable to the ordinary method of God's proceedings toward the same purpose.

Now God's proceeding with man according to the Gospel, the general tenor thereof doth set out to be this: that God out of his infinite goodness and mercy, in consideration of what his beloved Son, our blessed Lord, hath performed and suffered, in obedience to his will, and for the redemption of mankind, (which by transgression of his laws, and defailance in duty toward him, had grievously offended him and fallen from his favour, was involved in guilt, and stood obnoxious to punishment,) is become reconciled to them, (passing by and fully pardoning all offences by them committed against him,) so as generally to proffer

mercy, upon certain reasonable and gentle terms, SERM.  
V.  
to all that shall sincerely embrace such overtures  
of mercy, and heartily resolve to comply with those  
terms required by him; namely, the returning and  
adhering to him, forsaking all impiety and iniquity,  
constantly persisting in faithful obedience to his  
holy commandments; this, I say, is the proceeding  
of God, which the Christian Gospel doth especially  
hold forth, and which, according to our Lord's  
commission and command, the Apostles did first  
preach to men; as whosoever will consider the  
drift and tenor of their preaching, will easily dis-  
cern; which therefore St Paul may reasonably be  
supposed here to assert and vindicate against the  
Jews, and other adversaries of the Gospel: con-  
sequently the terms he useth should be so inter-  
preted as to express that matter; whence being  
justified will imply that which a person embracing  
the Gospel doth immediately receive from God, in  
that way of grace and mercy, viz. an absolution  
from his former crimes, an acquittance from his  
debts, a state of innocence and guiltlessness in  
God's sight, an exemption from vengeance and  
punishment; all that which by him sometimes, and  
by the other Apostles, is couched under the phrases  
of remission of sins, having sins blotted out and  
washed away, being cleansed from sin; and the  
like: thus considering the nature of the matter  
and design of his discourse, would incline us to  
understand this word.

Luke xxiv.  
47.

Acts xiii.  
38;  
xxii. 16;  
ii. 38;  
iii. 19;  
v. 31.  
I John i. 7.

2 Again, the manner of his prosecuting his  
discourse, and the arguments by which he inferreth  
his conclusions concerning the Gospel, do confirm  
this notion. He discourseth, and proveth at large,



**SERM.** that all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, were  
**V.**

shut up under sin, that all had sinned, and did fall  
 short of the glory of God, (that is, of rendering  
 him his due glory by dutiful obedience,) that every  
 mouth was stopped, having nothing to say in de-  
 fence of their transgressions, and that all the world  
 stood *obnoxious* (*ὑπόδικος*) to the severity of God's  
 judgments; that not only the light of nature was  
 insufficient to preserve men from offending inex-  
 cusably, even according to the verdict of their own  
 consciences, but that the written law of God had  
 (to manifold experience) proved ineffectual to that  
 purpose, serving rather to work wrath, to bring  
 men under a curse, to aggravate their guilt, to con-  
 vince them of their sinfulness, to discourage and  
 perplex them; upon which general state of men  
 (so implicated in guilt, so liable to wrath) is con-  
 sequent a necessity either of condemnation and  
 punishment, or of mercy and pardon.

He doth also imply, (that which in the Epistle  
 to the Galatians, where he prosecuteth the same  
 argument, is more expressly delivered,) that no  
 precedent dispensation had exhibited any manifest  
 overture, or promise of pardon; for the light of na-  
 ture doth only direct unto duty, condemning every  
 man in his own judgment and conscience, who  
 transgresseth it; but as to pardon in case of trans-  
 gression, it is blind and silent; and the law of  
 Moses rigorously exacteth punctual obedience, de-  
 nouncing in express terms a condemnation and  
 curse to the transgressors thereof in any part; from  
 whence he collecteth, that no man can be justified  
 by the works of the law, (natural or Mosaical; or  
 that no precedent dispensation can justify any man,)

Rom. iii. 9;  
 xi. 32;  
 iii. 19, 23.  
 Gal. iii.  
 22.

Rom. viii.  
 3.  
 Gal. iii. 21.  
 Rom. iv.  
 15;  
 iii. 20;  
 vii. 7.  
 Gal. ii. 16,  
 20.  
 Rom. v.  
 20; vii. 8;

i. 20;  
 ii. 15;

Gal. iii. 10,  
 12.

Rom. iii.  
 20.

and that a man is justified by faith, or hath absolute need of such a justification as that, which the Gospel declareth and tendereth; *Λογίζόμεθα οὖν, We hence, saith he, collect, or argue, that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law: which justification must therefore import the receiving that free pardon, which the criminal and guilty world did stand in need of, which the forlorn and deplorable state of mankind did groan for, without which no man could have any comfort in his mind, any hope, or any capacity of salvation. If the state of man was a state of rebellion, and consequently of heinous guilt, of having forfeited God's favour, of obnoxiousness to God's wrath; then that justification which was needful was a dispensation of mercy, remitting that guilt, and removing those penalties.*

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Rom. iii.  
28;

Again, St Paul commendeth the excellency of the evangelical dispensation from hence, that it entirely doth ascribe the justification of men to God's mercy and favour, excluding any merit of man, any right or title thereto, grounded upon what man hath performed; consequently advancing the glory of God, and depressing the vanity of man; *If, saith he, Abraham were justified by works, he had whereof to boast; for that to him who worketh, wages are not reckoned as bestowed in favour, but are paid as debt: so it would be, if men were justified by works; they might claim to themselves the due consequences thereof, impunity and reward; they would be apt to please themselves, and boast of the effects arising from their own performances: but if, as the Gospel teacheth, men are justified freely (gratis) by God's mercy and grace, without*

iv. 2, 4;  
iii. 27.  
Tit. iii. 5.  
Eph. ii. 9.  
Rom. xi. 6;

iii. 24;

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V.  
any regard to what they formerly have done, either good or bad, those who have lived wickedly and

impiously (upon their compliance with the terms proposed to them) being no less capable thereof, than the most righteous and pious persons ; then  
Rom. iii. *Where is boasting? It is excluded;* then surely  
27;  
iv. 2; no man can assume anything to himself, then all  
Eph. ii. 9; the glory and praise are due to God's frank goodness : the purport of which reasoning (so often used) doth imply, that a man's justification signifieth his being accepted or approved as just, standing *rectus in curia*; being in God's esteem, and by his sentence absolved from guilt and punishment; the which cannot otherwise be obtained, than from Divine favour declared and exhibited in the Gospel; according as St Paul elsewhere fully speaketh :  
i. 6, 7. *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

Again, St Paul expresseth justification as an act of judgment performed by God, whereby he declareth his own righteousness, or justice; that justice consisting in acceptance of a competent satisfaction offered to him in amends for the debt due to him, and in reparation of the injury done unto him, in consequence thereof acquitting the debtor, and remitting the offence; so those words declare : *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time his righteousness: that*

Rom. iii.  
24, 25, 26.

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*he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* Justification there we see is expressed a result of Christ's redemption, and the act of God consequent thereon; so is remission of sins; God by them jointly demonstrating his justice and goodness, so that they may be well conceived the same thing diversely expressed, or having several names according to some diverse formalities of respect. So in other places, sometimes justification, sometimes remission of sins are reckoned the proper and immediate effects of our Saviour's passion; *Being* (saith St Paul in the 5th to the Romans) *justified by his blood, we shall be saved by him from wrath*: and, *In whom*, (saith he again in the first of the Epistle to the Ephesians) *we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins*; which argueth the equivalency of these terms.

Rom. v. 9.

Eph. i. 7.  
Col. i. 14.

So likewise a main point of the evangelical covenant on God's part is made justifying of a man by his faith, or upon it; and remission of sins upon the same condition, is also made the like principal point, which sometime is put alone, as implying all the benefits of that covenant.

Gal. iii. per  
tot.Rom. xi.  
27;

Again, justification is by St Paul made the immediate consequent, or special adjunct, of Baptism; therein, he saith, we die to sin, (by resolution and engagement to lead a new life in obedience to God's commandment,) and so dying we are said to be justified from sin, (that which otherwise is expressed, or expounded, by being freed from sin:) now the freedom from sin obtained in Baptism is frequently declared to be the remission of sin then conferred, and solemnly confirmed by a visible seal.

vi. 6, 7, 18,  
22.

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Eph. v.  
26.  
Tit. iii. 5.  
Acts xiii.  
38;  
xxii. 16.

Whereas also so frequently we are said to be justified by faith, and according to the general tenor of Scripture, the immediate consequent of faith is Baptism; therefore dispensing the benefits consigned in Baptism, is coincident with justification; and that dispensation is frequently signified to be the cleansing us from sin by entire remission thereof.

3 Further, the same notion may be confirmed by comparing this term with other terms and phrases equivalent, or opposite to this of justification.

Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8;  
One equivalent phrase is imputation of righteousness: *As, saith St Paul, David speaketh of that man's blessedness, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works; Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin:*

whence to him that considers the drift and force of St Paul's discourse, it will clearly appear, that justification, imputing righteousness, not imputing sin, and remission of sin, are the same thing; otherwise the Apostle's discourse would not signify or conclude anything.

iii. 20.  
Gal. ii. 16.  
Ps. cxliii.  
2.

For confirmation of his discourse (arguing free justification by God's mercy, not for our works) St Paul also doth allege that place in the Psalm, *For in thy sight shall no man living be justified;* the sense of which place is evidently this, that no man living, his actions being strictly tried and weighed, shall appear guiltless, or deserve to be acquitted; but shall stand in need of mercy, or can no otherwise be justified than by a special act of grace.

Rom. iv. 3,  
22.  
Gal. iii. 6.

Again, imputing faith for righteousness is the same with justifying by faith: *Abraham believed*

*God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness: but that imputation is plainly nothing else but the approving him, and taking him for a righteous person in regard to his faith.* SERM.  
V.

Again, justification is the same with being righteous before God, as appeareth by those words: *Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified: but being just before God plainly signifieth nothing else but being accepted by God, or approved to his esteem and judgment.* Rom. ii.  
13;

Being reconciled to God seemeth also to be the same with being justified by him; as appeareth by those words, *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life: where πολλῶ μᾶλλον δικαιωθέντες, and πολλῶ μᾶλλον καταλλαγέντες, seem to signify the same; but that reconciliation is interpreted by remission of sins: God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* v. 9, 10.  
2 Cor. v.  
19.

To obtain mercy is another term signifying justification; and what doth that import but having the remission of sins in mercy bestowed on us? Rom. xi.  
30, 31, 32.  
1 Pet. ii.  
10.

Again, justification is opposed directly to condemnation: *As, saith he, by the offence of one man (judgment came) upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one man (the free gift came) upon all men to justification of life; justification of life, that is, a justification so relating to life, or bestowing a promise thereof, as the condemnation opposite thereto respected death, which* Rom. v.  
18.

SERM. V. it threatened. In which place St Paul comparing the first Adam with his actions, and their consequences, to the second Adam with his performances, and what resulted from them, teacheth us, that as the transgression of the first did involve mankind in guilt, and brought consequently upon men a general sentence of death, (forasmuch as all men did follow him in commission of sin;) so the obedience of the second did absolve all men from guilt, and restored them consequently into a state of immortality, (all men, under the condition prescribed, who, as it is said, should receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness tendered to them;) the justification therefore he speaketh of doth so import an absolution from guilt and punishment, as the condemnation signifieth a being declared guilty, and adjudged to punishment.

Rom. v.  
17.

Bellarmino<sup>e</sup>, indeed, (who, in answering to this place objected against his doctrine, blunders extremely, and is put to his trumps of sophistry) telleth us, that in this place, to maintain the parallel or antithesis between Adam and Christ, justification must signify infusion of grace, or putting into a man's soul an inherent righteousness; because Adam's sin did constitute us unjust

<sup>e</sup> De Justif. II. 3. [Nam justificare hoc loco (Rom. v. 17—19) esse justum facere, non justum pronunciare, perspicuum est, tum ex illis verbis, *Justi constituentur multi*, ubi declarat Apostolus ipse, quid sit justificari, ac dicit esse justum constitui; justum autem constitui, et justum fieri idem sunt; tum ex antithesi Adami ad Christum, scribit enim Apostolus, sic nos constitui justos per obedientiam Christi, quo modo constituti sumus injusti per inobedientiam Adami; constat autem per inobedientiam Adami nos injustos esse constitutos, injustitia in nobis vere ac re ipsa inhærente, non injustitia Adami nobis imputata.]

with an inherent unrighteousness: but (with his favour) justification and condemnation being both of them the acts of God, and it being plain, that God condemning doth not infuse any inherent unrighteousness into man, neither doth he justifying, formally (if the antithesis must be put) put any inherent righteousness into him; inherent unrighteousness in the former case may be a consequent of that condemnation, and inherent righteousness may be connected with this justification; but neither that nor this may formally signify those qualities respectively: as the inherent unrighteousness consequent upon Adam's sin is not included in God's condemning, so neither is the inherent righteousness proceeding from our Saviour's obedience contained in God's justifying men.

But however most plainly (and beyond all evasions) justification and condemnation are opposed elsewhere in this Epistle: *Τὸς ἐγκαλέσει κατὰ ἐκλεκτῶν Θεοῦ*, *Who, saith St Paul, shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* (or criminate against them.) *It is God who justifieth; who is he that condemneth?* What can be more clear, than that there justification signifieth absolution from all guilt and blame?

4 Further, this notion may be confirmed by excluding that sense, which in opposition thereto is assigned, according to which justification is said to import, not only remission of sin, and acceptance with God, but the making a man intrinsically righteous, by infusing into him, as they speak<sup>1</sup>, a habit of grace, or charity; the putting into a man a righteousness, *By which* (as the Council of Trent

SERM.  
V.

Rom. viii.  
33, 34.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bell. de Justif. n. 3.



SERM. V. expresseth it) *we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and are not only reputed, but are called, and become truly righteous, receiving righteousness in ourselves*<sup>s</sup>.

Now admitting this to be true, as in a sense it surely is, that whoever (according to St Paul's meaning in this Epistle) is justified, is also really at the same time endued with some measure of that intrinsic righteousness which those men speak of, (forasmuch as that faith, which is required to justification, (being a gift of God, managed by his providence, and wrought by his preventing grace,) doth include a sincere and stedfast purpose of forsaking all impiety, of amendment of life, of obedience to God, which purpose cleanseth the heart, and is apt to produce as well inward righteousness of heart, as outward righteousness of practice; for that also to every sound believer upon his faith is bestowed the Spirit of God, as a principle of righteousness, dwelling in him, directing, admonishing, exciting him to do well; assisting and enabling him sufficiently to the performance of those conditions, or those duties, which Christianity requireth, and the believer thereof undertaketh; which, the man's honest and diligent endeavour concurring, will surely beget the practice of all righteousness, and in continuance of such practice will render it habitual;)—avowing, I say, willingly, that such a righteousness doth ever accompany the justification St Paul speaketh of, yet that sort of righteousness doth not seem implied

<sup>s</sup> [Qua videlicet ab eo donati renovamur spiritu mentis nostræ, et non modo reputamur, sed vere justi nominamur et sumus, justitiam in nobis recipientes.—Sess. vi. de Justif. cap. vii.]

by the word justification, according to St Paul's intent in those places where he discourseth about justification by faith; for that such a sense of the word doth not well consist with the drift and efficacy of his reasoning, nor with divers passages in his discourse. For, SERM.  
V.

1 Whereas St Paul, from the general depravation of manners in all men, both Jews and Gentiles, argueth the necessity of such a justification, as the Christian Gospel declareth and exhibiteth, if we should take justification for infusing an inherent quality of righteousness into men, by the like discourse we might infer the imperfection and insufficiency of Christianity itself, and consequently the necessity of another dispensation beside it; for that even all Christians, as St James saith, do offend often, and commission of sin doth also much reign among them; so that St Paul's discourse (justification being taken in this sense) might strongly be retorted against himself. James iii.

2 Supposing that sense of justification, a Jew might easily invalidate St Paul's ratiocination, by saying, that even their Religion did plainly enough declare such a justification, which God did bestow upon all good men in their way, as by their frequent acknowledgments and devotions is apparent; such as those of the Psalmist: *Create in me a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within me. Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; incline my heart unto thy testimonies.* Which sort of prayers God hearing did infuse righteousness, and justified those persons in this sense; so that Christianity herein could not challenge anything Ps. li. 10;  
exliii. 10;  
cxix. 35,  
36.

SERM. peculiar, nor could upon this score appear so necessary, as St Paul pretendeth.  
V.

3 From the justification St Paul speaketh of, all respect to any works, and to any qualifications in men, (such as might beget in them any confidence in themselves, or yield occasion of boasting,) is excluded; it cannot therefore well be understood for a constituting man intrinsically righteous, or infusing worthy qualities into him; but rather for an act of God terminated upon a man as altogether unworthy of God's love, as impious, as an enemy, as a pure object of mercy; so it is most natural to understand those expressions, importing the same  
Rom. iv. 5; thing; *God justifieth the ungodly; We being sin-*  
v. 8; *ners, Christ died for us;* (purchasing, as the following words imply, justification for us;) *Being yet enemies, we by his death were reconciled,* or justified, for reconciliation and justification, as we before noted, do there signify the same.

4 Abraham is brought in as an instance of a person justified in the same manner, as Christians are according to the Gospel: but his justification was merely the approving and esteeming him righteous, in regard (not to any other good works, but) to his stedfast faith, and strong persuasion concerning the power and faithfulness of God;  
iv. 21; because, *He was fully persuaded, that what God had promised he was able to perform;* to which faith and justification consequent thereon, St Paul,  
iv. 23, 24. comparing those of Christians, subjoineth; *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.* As then it were

an idle thing to fancy a righteousness, upon the score of that belief, dropt into Abraham; and as his being justified is expressly called, having righteousness, upon the account of his faith, imputed, or ascribed, to him; so our justification (like and answerable to his) should correspondently be understood, the approving and accounting us, notwithstanding our former transgressions, as righteous persons, in regard to that honest and stedfast faith, wherein we resemble that father of the faithful.

SERM.  
V.

Rom. iv.  
16.

Even St James himself, when he saith, that Abraham and Rahab were justified by works, it is evident that he meaneth not that they had certain righteous qualities infused into them, or were made thence by God intrinsically more righteous than they were before, but that they were approved and accepted by God, because of the good works they performed, (in faith and obedience to God,) one of them offering to sacrifice his son, the other preserving the spies sent from God's people.

James ii.  
21, 25.

5 The so often using the word imputation of righteousness, instead of justification, doth imply this act not to be a transient operation upon the soul of man, but an act immanent to God's mind, respecting man only as its object, and translating him into another relative state: with this sense that word excellently well agreeth, otherwise it were obscure, and so apt to perplex the matter, that probably St Paul would not have used it.

6 Again, when it is said again and again, that faith is imputed for righteousness, it is plain enough, that no other thing in man was required thereto; to say, that he is thereby sanctified, or hath gracious habits infused, is uncouth and arbitrary:

SERM. the obvious meaning is, that therefore he is gra-  
 V. ciously accepted and approved, as we said before.

7 We might in fine add, that the word justification is very seldom or never used in that sense of making persons righteous, or infusing righteousness into them. Bellarmine<sup>b</sup> and Grotius, having searched with all possible diligence, do allege three or four places, wherein (with some plausible appearance) they pretend it must be so understood: but as they are so few, so are they not any of them thoroughly clear and certain: but are capable to be otherwise interpreted without much straining; the clearest place, Dan. xii. 3, the LXX. read δικαιωσις, ἀπὸ δικαίων, which the Hebrew and sense will bear. Wherefore the other sense which we have maintained, being undeniably common and current in the Scripture, and having so many particular reasons shewing it agreeable to St Paul's intent, seemeth rather to be embraced.

In St Paul's Epistles I can only find three or four places, wherein the word justifying may with any fair probability be so extended as to signify an internal operation of God upon the soul of men; they are these:

1 Cor. vi. *And such were some of you; but ye have been washed, but ye have been sanctified, but ye have been justified in the name of Christ Jesus, and by (ἐν) the Spirit of our God: where justification being performed by the Spirit of God, seemeth to imply a spiritual operation upon a man's soul, as an ingredient thereof.*

Tit. iii. *According to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

<sup>b</sup> [De Justif. ii. 3.]

*which he poured on us richly by Jesus Christ our Saviour ; that being justified by his grace, we may be made heirs according to the hope of everlasting life:* where God's justifying us by the grace of Christ seemeth to include the renewing by the Holy Ghost. SERM. V.

*He that dieth is justified from sin :* where St Paul speaking about our obligation to lead a new life in holy obedience, upon account of our being dedicated to Christ, and renouncing sin in baptism, may be interpreted to mean a being really in our hearts purified and freed from sin. Rom. vi. 7;

*Whom he predestinated, those he called ; and whom he called, those he justified ; and whom he justified, those he glorified :* where the chief acts of God toward those who finally shall be saved, being in order purposely recited, and justification being immediately (without interposing sanctification) coupled to glorification, the word may seem to comprise sanctification. viii. 30.

If considering these places (which yet are not clearly prejudicial to the notion we have made good, but may well be interpreted so as to agree thereto) it shall seem to any, that St Paul doth not ever so strictly adhere to that notion, as not sometime to extend the word to a larger sense, I shall not much contend about it: it is an ordinary thing for all writers to use their words sometimes in a larger, sometimes in a stricter sense; and it sufficeth to have shewn, that where St Paul purposely treateth about the matter we discourse upon, the purport of his discourse argueth, that he useth it according to that notion which we have proposed.

8 I shall only add one small observation, or conjecture, favouring this notion; which is the

SERM.  
V.

probable occasion of all St Paul's discourse and disputation about this point, which seemeth to have been this: That Christianity should (upon so slender a condition or performance as that of faith) tender unto all persons indifferently, however culpable or flagitious their former lives had been, a plenary remission of sins and reception into God's favour, did seem an unreasonable and implausible thing to many<sup>i</sup>: the Jews could not well conceive, or relish, that any man so easily should be translated into a state equal or superior to that which they took themselves peculiarly to enjoy: the Gentiles themselves (especially such as conceited well of their own wisdom and virtue) could hardly digest it: Celsus in Origen<sup>k</sup> could not imagine or admit, that bare faith should work such a miracle, as presently to turn a dissolute person into a saint, beloved of God, and designed to happiness.

Zosimus saith of Constantine, that he chose Christianity as the only Religion that promised impunity and pardon for his enormous practices<sup>l</sup>;

<sup>i</sup> Vid. Cyrill. adv. Julian. Lib. vii. Opp. Tom. vii. p. 248 κ. where justification is very well described. [Δι' αὐτοῦ (Χριστοῦ) γὰρ ἡμῖν ἰλεως ὁ Πατήρ. δικαιούντος δὲ τοῦ νομοθέτου καὶ ὑπάσης ἡμᾶς ἀπαλλάττοντος γραφῆς, καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ ταῖς παραβάσεσιν ἀνέντος δίκης, καὶ προσέτι νοητῶς ἀγιάζοντος διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, καὶ ἀναμορφούντος ἡμᾶς καθ' ὃν οἶδε τρόπον αὐτὸς εἰς καινότητα ζωῆς σώφρονός τε καὶ ἐπιεικοῦς· τίς ὁ κατακρίνων ἔτι, ἢ καὶ ποῖος ἐν ἡμῖν ἔσται ῥύπος, οὐκ ἂν ἔχοιμι φράσαι.]

<sup>k</sup> [Con. Cels. i. pp. 8, 9.]

<sup>l</sup> [Εἰπόντων δὲ ὡς οὐ παραδέδοται καθαρῶς τρόπος δυσσεβήματα τηλικαῦτα καθῆραι δυνάμενος, Αἰγύπτιός τις ἐξ Ἰβηρίας εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἔλθων καὶ ταῖς εἰς τὰ βασιλεια γυναιξὶ συνήθους γενόμενος, ἐντυχὼν τῷ Κωνσταντίνῳ πάσης ἀμαρτάνος ἀναιρετικὴν εἶναι τὴν τῶν Χριστιανῶν διεβεβαίωσατο δόξαν καὶ τοῦτο ἔχειν ἐπάγγελμα, τὸ τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς μεταλαμβάνοντας αὐτῆς πάσης ἀμαρτίας ἔξω παραχρῆμα καθίστασθαι. δεξιμένου δὲ ῥᾶστα τοῦ Κωνσταντίνου τὸν λόγον, &c.—Lib. ii. cap. 29.]

intimating his dislike of that point in our Religion. SERM.  
V.  
This prejudice against the Gospel St Paul removeth, by shewing that, because of all men's guilt and sinfulness, such an exhibition of mercy, such an overture of acceptance, such a remission of sin was necessary in order to salvation, so that without it no man could be exempted from wrath and misery; and that consequently all other Religions (as not exhibiting such a remission) were to be deemed in a main point defective: when therefore he useth the word justification to express this matter, it is reasonable to suppose, that he intendeth thereby to signify that remission, or dispensation of mercy.

It may be objected, that St Austin and some others of the Fathers do use the word commonly according to the sense of the Tridentine Council. I answer, that the point having never been discussed, and they never having thoroughly considered the sense of St Paul, might unawares take the word as it sounded in Latin, especially the sense they affixed to it signifying a matter very true and certain in Christianity. The like hath happened to other Fathers in other cases; and might happen to them in this, not to speak accurately in points that never had been sifted by disputation. More, I think, we need not say in answer to their authority.

VI. So much may suffice for a general explication of the notion; but for a more full clearing of the point, it may be requisite to resolve a question concerning the time when this act is performed or dispensed. It may be inquired, when God justifieth, whether once, or at several times, or continually. To which question I answer briefly:



SERM.  
V.

I That the justification which St Paul discourseth of, seemeth in his meaning only or especially to be that act of grace, which is dispensed to persons at their Baptism, or at their entrance into the Church; when they openly professing their faith, and undertaking the practice of Christian duty, God most solemnly and formally doth absolve them from all guilt, and accepteth them into a state of favour with him: that St Paul only or chiefly respecteth this act, considering his design, I am inclined to think, and many passages in his discourse seem to imply.

If his design were (as I conceive it probable) to vindicate the proceeding of God, peculiarly declared in the Gospel, in receiving the most notorious and heinous transgressors to grace in Baptism, then especially must the justification he speaketh of relate to that; to confirm which supposition, we may consider, that,

(1) In several places justification is coupled with baptismal regeneration and absolution: *Such were some of you; but ye have been washed, ye have been sanctified, ye have been justified in the name of Christ Jesus:* (where, by the way, being sanctified and being justified seem equivalent terms; as in that place where Christ is said to have given himself for the Church, *That he might sanctify it, and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word;* sanctification, I conceive, importeth the same thing with justification). Again, *He saved us by the laver of regeneration, that having been justified by his grace, we may be made heirs of everlasting life.*

1 Cor. vi. 11.  
Eph. v. 25, 26.  
Heb. x. 29.  
Tit. iii. 5, 7.  
Heb. x. 22, 23.

(2) St Paul in expressing this act, as it respecteth

the faithful, commonly doth use a tense referring to the past time: he saith not *δικαιούμενοι*, *being justified*, but *δικαιωθέντες*, *having been justified*; not *δικαιούσθε*, *ye are justified*, but *δικαιώθητε*, *ye have been justified*; namely, at some remarkable time, that is, at their entrance into Christianity. Our translators do render it according to the present time; but it should be rendered as I say, in our text, and in other places.

SERM.  
V.  
Rom. v. 1,  
9.  
Tit. iii. 7.  
1 Cor. vi.  
11.

(3) St Paul in the 6th to the Romans discourseth thus: Seeing we in Baptism are cleansed and dis-entangled from sin, are dead to it, and so justified from it, God forbid that we should return to live in the practice thereof, so abusing and evacuating the grace we have received; which discourse seemeth plainly to signify, that he treateth about the justification conferred in Baptism.

(4) He expresseth the justification he speaketh of by the words *πάρεσις τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων*, *the passing over foregoing sins*, which seemeth to respect that universal absolution, which is exhibited in Baptism: *Being*, saith he, *justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*

(5) The relation this justification hath to faith, being dispensed in regard thereto, (or upon condition thereof,) doth infer the same: Faith is nothing else but a hearty embracing Christianity, which first exerteth itself by open declaration and avowal in Baptism, (when we believe with our hearts to righteousness, and confess with our mouth

x. 10.

SERM.  
V.

to salvation;) to that time therefore the act of justification may be supposed especially to appertain: then, when the evangelical covenant is solemnly ratified, the grace thereof especially is conferred. Upon such considerations I conceive that St Paul's justification chiefly doth respect that act of grace, which God consigneth to us at our Baptism. But further,

2 The virtue and effect of that first justifying act doth continue (we abide in a justified state) so long as we do perform the conditions imposed by God, and undertaken by us at our first justification; *Holding fast the profession of our hope without wavering; Keeping faith, and a good conscience;* so long as we do not forfeit the benefit of that grace by making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, relapsing into infidelity, or profaneness of life. Our case is plainly like to that of a subject, who having rebelled against his prince, and thence incurred his displeasure, but having afterward upon his submission, by the clemency of his prince, obtained an act of pardon, restoring him to favour and enjoyment of the protection and privileges suitable to a loyal subject, doth continue in this state, until by forsaking his allegiance, and running again into rebellion, he so loseth the benefit of that pardon, that his offence is aggravated thereby: so if we do persevere firm in faith and obedience, we shall (according to the purport of the evangelical covenant) continue in a state of grace and favour with God, and in effect remain justified; otherwise the virtue of our justification ceaseth, and we in regard thereto are more deeply involved in guilt.

Heb. x. 23.

1 Tim. i.  
19.

2 Pet. ii.  
20, &c.  
Heb. x.  
26, 38;  
vi. 1.

3 Although justification chiefly signifieth the first act of grace toward a Christian at his Baptism, yet (according to analogy of reason, and affinity in the nature of things) every dispensation of pardon granted upon repentance may be styled justification; for as particular acts of repentance, upon the commission of any particular sins, do not so much differ in nature, as in measure or degree, from that general conversion practised in embracing the Gospel; so the grace vouchsafed upon these penitential acts is only in largeness of extent, and solemnity of administration, diversified from that; especially considering, that repentance after Baptism is but a reviving of that first great resolution and engagement we made in Baptism<sup>m</sup>; that remission of sin upon it is only the renovation of the grace then exhibited; that the whole transaction in this case is but a reinstating the covenant then made (and afterward by transgression infringed) upon the same terms, which were then agreed upon; that consequently, by congruous analogy, this remission of sins, and restoring to favour, granted to a penitent, are only the former justification reinforced; whence they may bear its name: but whether St Paul ever meaneth the word to signify thus, I cannot affirm.

Now according to each of these notions all good Christians may be said to have been justified; they have been justified by a general abolition of their sins, and reception into God's favour in Baptism; they so far have enjoyed the virtue of that gracious dispensation, and continued in a

<sup>m</sup> *Pœnitentia imitatur baptismatis gratiam.*—Hier adv. Pelag. Lib. 1. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 504.]

**SERM.** justified state, as they have persisted in faith and  
**V.** ——— obedience; they have, upon falling into sin, and  
rising thence by repentance, been justified by particular remissions: so that, *Having been justified by faith, they have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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**I Believe in God.**

## SERMON VI.

THE BEING OF GOD PROVED FROM THE  
FRAME OF THE WORLD.

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JER. LI. 15.

*He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established Jer. x. 12.  
the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the  
heaven by his understanding.*

THE attentive observation of this world, or <sup>SERM.</sup>  
visible frame, is not only in itself a most <sup>VI.</sup>  
worthy employment of our thoughts, (much more  
noble than any of those petty cares which com-  
monly possess or distract our minds,) but, if either  
the example of the best men, or the great useful-  
ness thereof to the best purposes, can oblige us, *see p. 11.*  
even a considerable duty not to be neglected by  
us. For it is that which affords most cogent and  
satisfactory arguments to convince us of, and to  
confirm us in, the belief of that truth which is the  
foundation of all Religion and piety, the being of  
one God, incomprehensibly excellent in all per-  
fections, the maker and upholder of all things; it  
instructs us not only that God is, but more dis-  
tinctly shews what he is; declaring his chief and  
peculiar attributes of wisdom, goodness, and power  
superlative; it also serves to beget in our minds  
affections toward God, suitable to those notions; a

**SERM.** reverent adoration of his unsearchable wisdom; an  
**VI.** awful dread of his powerful majesty; a grateful  
 love of his gracious benignity and goodness: to  
 these uses we find it applied by the best men, not  
 only by the wisest philosophers among heathens,  
 but by the holy prophets of God; who frequently  
 harp upon this string, and make sweetest melody  
 thereon; exciting both in themselves and others  
 pious thoughts and holy devotions therewith;  
 strengthening their faith in God; advancing their  
 reverence toward him; quickening and inflaming  
 their love of him; magnifying his glory and praise  
 thereby; by the consideration, I say, of those won-  
 derful effects discernible in nature, or appearing to  
 us in this visible world. And if ever to imitate  
 them herein were necessary, it seems to be so now,  
 when a pretence to natural knowledge, and ac-  
 quaintance with these things, hath been so much  
 abused to the promoting of Atheism and irreligion;  
 when that instrument which was chiefly designed,  
 and is of itself most apt, to bring all reasonable  
 creatures to the knowledge, and to the veneration  
 of their Maker, hath (in a method most preposter-  
 ous and unnatural) been perverted to contrary ends  
 and effects. To the preventing and removing  
 which abuse, as every man should contribute what  
 he can, so let me be allowed to endeavour some-  
 what toward it, by representing briefly what my  
 meditation did suggest, serving to declare, that (as  
 the Prophet asserts, or implies in the words I read)  
 even in this visible world, there are manifest tokens,  
 or footsteps, by which we may discover it to be the  
 work, or product, of one Being, incomprehensibly  
 wise, powerful, and good; to whom, consequently,

Ps. viii. 3;  
 xix. 1;  
 xxxiii. 5;  
 lxxxix. 11;  
 cxlviii. 5;  
 civ. 5;  
 cxv. 16;  
 cxix. 64;  
 cxlv. 10;  
 cxlvii. 4.

we must owe the highest respect and love, all possible worship and service. Of these footsteps, or signs, there be innumerable many, which, singly taken, do discover such perfections to be concerned in the production of them; the relation of several to each other doth more strongly and plainly confirm the same; the connexion and correspondence of all together doth still add force and evidence thereto, each attesting to the existence of those perfections, all conspiring to declare them concentrated and united in one cause and being.

I. View we first, singly, those things which are most familiar and obvious to our senses, (for only some such I mean to consider, such as any man awake, and in his senses, without any study or skill more than ordinary, without being a deep philosopher or a curious virtuoso, may with an easy attention observe and discern;) view we such objects, I say: for instance, first, those plants we every day do see, smell, and taste; have not that number, that figure, that order, that temperament, that whole contexture and contemperation of parts we discern in them, a manifest relation to those operations they perform? Were not such organs so fashioned, and so situated, and so tempered, and in all respects so fitted, some of them in order to the successive propagation of them, (that they might in kind never fail or perish, but in that respect become as it were immortal<sup>a</sup>;) some in regard to their present nutrition and maintenance, (that the individuals themselves might not, before their due period of subsistence run through, be

<sup>a</sup> Ἰνα τοῦ ἀεί, καὶ τοῦ θείου μετέχουσιν, ἡ δύραται.—Arist. de An. II. 4. [2.]



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spent, or destroyed;) some for shelter and defence against all sort of causes prejudicial to either of those continuances in being respectively; to omit those, which serve for grace and ornament? (Do not, I say, the seed most evidently respect the propagation of the kind; the root the drawing of nourishment, the nervous filaments the conveyance of that; the skin or bark, the keeping all together close and safe; the husks and shells, preservation of the seed; the leaves, defence of the fruit?) That such a constitution of parts is admirably fit for such purposes, we cannot be so stupid as not to perceive; we cannot but observe it necessary, for that by detraction, or altering any of them, we obstruct those effects. Whence then, I inquire, could that fitness proceed? from chance, or casual motions of matter? But is it not repugnant to the name and nature of chance, that anything regular or constant should arise from it<sup>b</sup>? that by it causes vastly many in number<sup>c</sup> and different in quality, (such as are the ingredients into the frame of the least organ in a plant,) should not once, not sometimes, not often only, but always, in one continual unaltered method concur to the same end and effect, (to the same useful end, to the same handsome effect?) Are not confusion, disparity, deformity, unaccountable change and variety, the proper issues of chance? It is Aristotle's discourse: *That one or two things, saith he, should happen to be in the same manner, is not unreasonable to suppose;*

<sup>b</sup> Fortuna amica varietati constantiam respuit.—Cic. de Nat. Deor. II. [16.]

<sup>c</sup> 'Ο δὲ λίαν ὑπερβάλλον ἀριθμὸς οὐ δύναται μετέχειν τάξεως· θείας γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο δυνάμει ἐργον, ἥτις καὶ τόδε συνέχει τὸ πᾶν.—Arist. Pol. VII. 4.

but that all things should conspire by chance, it looks like a fiction to conceive: what is universal and perpetual cannot result from chance. We can only, saith he again, with good reason assert, or suppose such causes of things, as we see generally or frequently to occur<sup>d</sup>. Now did we ever observe (or ever any man through the whole course of times) any new thing like or comparable to any of these, to spring up casually? Do we not with admiration regard (as a thing very rare and unaccountable) in other pieces of matter any gross resemblance to these, that seemeth to arise from contingent motions and occurrences of bodies? If chance hath formerly produced such things, how comes it, that it doth not sometime now produce the like; whence becomes it for so many ages altogether impotent and idle? Is it not the same kind of cause? hath it not the same instruments to work with, and the same materials to work upon? The truth is, as it doth not now, so it did not, it could not ever produce such effects; such effects are plainly improper and incongruous to such a cause: chance never writ a legible book; chance never built a fair house; chance never drew a neat picture; it never did any of these things, nor ever will; nor can be without absurdity supposed able to do them; which yet are works very gross and rude, very easy and feasible, as it were, in comparison to the production of a flower or a tree. It is not therefore

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<sup>d</sup> Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ᾧ δύο τούτων τὸν τρόπον ἔχειν, οὐδὲν ἀτοπον· τὸ δὲ πάνθ' ὁμοίως πλάσματος ἔοικεν. ἅμα δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς φύσει τὸ εἶς ἔτυχεν, οὐδὲ τὸ πανταχοῦ καὶ πᾶσιν ὑπαρχόν, τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης.—De Cælo, II. 8.

Μόρα γὰρ ταῦτα θετίον εὐλόγως, ὅσα ἐπὶ πολλῶν, ἢ πάντων ὁρῶμεν ὑπάρχοντα.—ibid. [I. 10.]

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reasonable to ascribe those things to chance: to what then? will you say, to necessity? If you do, you do only alter the phrase; for necessary causality (as applicable to this case, and taken without relation to some wisdom or counsel that established it) is but another name for chance; they both are but several terms denoting blindness and unadvisedness in action; both must imply a fortuitous determination of causes, acting without design or rule. A fortuitous determination, I say; for motions of matter, not guided by art or counsel, must be in their rise fortuitous, (insomuch as that according to the nature of the thing there is no repugnance, and we may easily conceive it possible, that the matter might have been moved otherwise; there being therein no principle originally determining it to this more than that sort of motion;) and the same motions in their process must be determinate, because in their subject there is no principle, whereby it can alter its course. The same effect therefore of this kind, if necessary, is casual as to its original, and in that respect may be said to come from chance; if casual, is necessary in the progress, and may thence be said to proceed from necessity. And although we should suppose the beginning of these causes in their action, or motion, to be eternal, it were all one; for whether now, or yesterday, or from eternity, infers no difference (except the entangling our minds, and encumbering the case with impertinent circumstances) as to our purpose; not the circumstance of the time, but the quality of the cause being only here considerable; the same causes (abstracting from all counsel ordering them) being alike apt or inept yesterday

as to-day, always as sometimes, from all eternity as at any set time, to produce such effects. Neither can we therefore reasonably attribute the effects we speak of to necessity; except only to such an hypothetical necessity, as implies a determination from causes acting by will and understanding; of such a necessity matter is very susceptible; being perfectly obedient to art directing it with competent force; as on the other hand we find it by reason and experience altogether unapt, without such direction, of itself (that is, either necessarily or contingently) to come into any regular form, or to pursue any constant course; it being, as we see, shattered into particles innumerable, different in size, shape, and motion, according to all variety more than imaginable; thence only fit in their proceedings to cross and confound each other: the determination therefore of such causes as these to such ends and effects, can be only the result of wisdom, art, and counsel; which alone (accompanied with sufficient power) can digest things void of understanding into handsome order, can direct them unto fit uses, can preserve them in a constant tenor of action; these effects must therefore, I say, proceed from wisdom, and that no mean one, but such as greatly surpasses our comprehension, joined with a power equally great: for to digest bodies so very many, so very fine and subtle, so diverse in motion and tendency, that they shall never hinder or disturb one another, but always conspire to the same design, is a performance exceedingly beyond our capacity to reach how it could be contrived or accomplished; all the endeavours of our deepest skill and most laborious

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industry cannot arrive to the producing of any work not extremely inferior to any of these, not in comparison very simple and base; neither can our wits serve to devise, nor our sense to direct, nor our hand to execute any work, in any degree like to those. So that it was but faintly, though truly said of him in Cicero, concerning things of this kind; *Nature's powerful sagacity no skill, no hand, no artist, can follow by imitation*°.

And if we have reason to acknowledge so much wisdom and power discovered in one plant, and the same consequently multiplied in so many thousands of diverse kinds; how much more may we discern them in any one animal, in all of them! the parts of whom in unconceivable variety, in delicate minuteness, in exquisiteness of shape, position, and temper, do, indeed, so far exceed the other, as they appear designed to functions far more various and more noble: the enumeration of a few whereof obvious to our sense, in some one living creature, together with conjectures about their manner of operation and their use, how much industry of man hath it employed; how many volumes hath it filled, and how many more may it do, without detecting a ten-thousandth part of what is there most obvious and easy; without piercing near the depth of that wisdom which formed so curious a piece! So much however is palpably manifest, that each of these so many organs was designed, and fitted on purpose to that chief use, or operation, we see it to perform; this of them, to continue the kind; that, to preserve the

° *Cujus (naturæ) solertiam nulla ars, nulla manus, nemo opifex consequi possit imitando.*—Cic. de Nat. Deor. [II. 32.]

*individuum*; this, to discern what is necessary, convenient, or pleasant to the creature, or what is dangerous, offensive, or destructive thereto; that to pursue or embrace, to decline or shun it; this, to enjoy what is procured of good; that, to remove what is hurtful or useless, or to guard from mischief and injury; that each one is furnished with such apt instruments, suitable to its particular needs, appetites, capacities, stations, is most apparent; and I must therefore here ask again, (and that with more advantage,) whence this could proceed; whence all these parts came to be fashioned and suited; all of them so necessary, or so convenient, that none without the imperfection and the prejudice of the creature, some not without its destruction, can be wanting? who shaped and tempered those hidden subtle springs of life, sense, imagination, memory, passion; who impressed on them a motion so regular and so durable, which through so many years, among so many adverse contingencies assailing it, is yet so steadily maintained? Can this, however, proceed from giddy chance, or blind necessity? could ever (of old or lately, it is all one,) senseless matter jumble itself so fortunately, into so wonderful postures, so that of those innumerable myriads of atoms, or small insensible bodies, (which compose each of these curious engines,) none should in its roving miss the way; none fail to stop and seat itself in that due place, where exactest art would have disposed it?<sup>f</sup>

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<sup>f</sup> "Ἐπελθε τῶν μελῶν ἀπάντων τὴν διάπλασιν, τὸ σχῆμα, τὰς ἐνεργείας, τὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα συμφωνίαν καὶ πάσης πόλεως εὐνομούμενης καὶ φιλοσόφους ἅπαντας τοὺς πολίτας ἐχούσης ἀκριβεστέραν ὄψει τὴν τῶν μελῶν τούτων πρὸς ἄλληλα πολιτείαν.—Chrys. Opp. Tom. vi. Or. LXIX. [p. 711.]

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Could so many, so dim, so narrow marks be hit without the aim of a most piercing and unerring eye; without the guidance of a most steady and immoveable hand? All that grace and beauty, which so delights our sense beholding it; all that correspondence and symmetry, which so satisfies our mind considering it; all that virtue and energy, extending to performances so great and admirable, must they be ascribed to causes of no worth, and supposed done to no purpose? That eye which reaches the very stars, and in a moment renders all the world, as it were, present to the creature that useth it<sup>s</sup>; that ear which perceives the least stirring of the air about it, and so subtly distinguishes the smallest differences in its motion; that tongue which so readily is composed to imitate so many petty diversities of tune; those other organs, which are affected by the least breath or vapour, by the least tang or savour, so that it by them can both perceive the presence, and distinguish the quality of whatever is near, that it may not be disappointed in missing what is beneficial, nor be surprised by the assault of what is noxious thereto; all these and many more, the defect, distemper, or dislocation of which would be disgraceful, incommodious, or destructive to the creature<sup>h</sup>; all these,

<sup>s</sup> Vid. Chrys. Ἀνθρ' ιά. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 535.] [Ἄλλ' ὁμοῦ ἰσχυσεν ὁ ἀριστοτέχνης Θεὸς ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης, ἐξ ἧς γίνεται κέραμος καὶ πλίνθος μόνου, ὀφθαλμὸν οὕτω ποιῆσαι καλόν, ὥς ἅπαντας ἐκπλήττειν τοὺς ὁρῶντας, καὶ τοσαύτην ἐνθεῖναι τοῦτοφ' δύναμιν, ὥς ἀέρος τοσοῦτον ὕψος καθορᾶν, καὶ μικρᾶς κόρης ἀντιλήψει τοσαῦτα περιλαμβάνειν σώματα, καὶ ὄρη, καὶ νάπας, καὶ βουνούς, καὶ πελάγη, καὶ οὐρανὸν δι' ἐκείνης τῆς μικρᾶς. &c.]

<sup>h</sup> Μή τι ἀχρηστότερον τριχῶν τῶν ἐπὶ γενείου; τί οὖν; οὐ συνεχρήσατο καὶ ταύταις ὥς μάλιστα πρεπῶτως ἐδύνατο; οὐ διέκρινε δι' αὐτῶν τὸ ἄρβεν καὶ τὸ θῆλυ; &c.—Epict. Diss. i. 16. [10.]

I say, can any man, endued with common sense, or ordinary ingenuity, affirm to have proceeded from any other cause, than from a wisdom and power incomprehensible? May not the most excellent pieces of human artifice, the fairest structures, the finest portraitures, the most ingenious and useful inquiries, such as we are wont most to admire and commend, with infinitely more ease, happen to exist without any contrivance or industry spent upon them? If we cannot allow those rude imitations of nature to spring up of themselves, but as soon as we espy them are ready to acknowledge them products of excellent art, though we know not the artist, nor did see him work; how much more reason is there that we should believe those works of nature, so incomparably more accurate, to proceed also from art, although invisible to us, and performing its workmanship by a secret hand? I can assure you of those, who have with greatest attention contemplated these things, and who pass for men most able to judge in the case, (even those who have discovered least affection to Religion, or, indeed, are more than suspected of an aversion from it; whose words therefore may be taken at least for impartial dictates of common sense,) that even from such the irresistible force and evidence of the thing hath extorted clear and ample confessions to this purpose; that in nature nothing is performed without reason or design; but everything in the best manner and to the best end; beyond what is done in any art; is frequently asserted and assumed by Aristotle himself<sup>1</sup>, as a most evident truth;

<sup>1</sup> Μᾶλλον δ' ἐστὶ τὸ οὐ ἐνεκα, καὶ τὸ καλὸν, ἐν τοῖς τῆς φύσεως ἔργοις, ἢ ἐν τοῖς τῆς τέχνης.—De Part. An. i. 1.



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that in contriving the frame of our bodies, (and the same holdeth concerning the bodies of other animals,) a wisdom inscrutable; in accomplishing it, a power insuperable; in designing to them so much of decency and convenience, a benignity worthy of all veneration are demonstrated, Galen in several places, with language very full and express, yea very earnest and pathetical, doth acknowledge<sup>k</sup>. That who doth attently regard a locust, or a caterpillar, or any other viler animal, shall every where therein discover a wonderful art and diligence, is an aphorism dropt even from the gloomy pen of Cardan<sup>l</sup>. That, *If any man shall view thoroughly all the instruments both of generation and nutrition, and doth not perceive them to have been made and ordered to their respective offices by some mind, (or intelligent agent,) he is to be reputed himself void of mind<sup>m</sup>, (or out of his wits,) is the expression of another person well known among us, whom few do judge partial to this side, or suspicious of bearing a favourable prejudice to Religion. Thus doth common sense from these sort of beings, whereof there be innumerable exposed daily to our observation, even singly con-*

<sup>k</sup> Ἡ φύσις δὲ ποιεῖ τῶν ἐνδεχομένων τὸ βέλτιστον.—Phys. ii. 8. [?]

<sup>l</sup> Ἡ φύσις οὐδὲν ἀλόγως οὐδὲ μάτην ποιεῖ.—De Cælo, ii. 11.

<sup>m</sup> Ἐνεκά του ἅπαντα ὑπάρχει τὰ φύσει.—De Anima, iii. 12.

<sup>k</sup> Οἷος μὲν ἐστὶ τὴν σοφίαν, οἷος δὲ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅποιος δὲ τὴν χρηστότητα, &c.—Gal. de Placitis Hippoc. et Plat. lib. vii. De Usu Part. iii.

<sup>l</sup> Card. de Variet. vii. 27. p. 283.

<sup>m</sup> Itaque ad sensus procedo, satis habens si hujusmodi res attigero tantum, plenius autem tractandas aliis reliquero, qui si machinas omnes tum generationis, tum nutritionis satis perspexerint, nec tamen eas a mente aliqua conditas, ordinatasque ad sua quasque officia viderint, ipsi profecto sine mente esse censendi sunt.—Hobbes. de Hom. cap. i.

sidered, deduce the existence of a wisdom, power, and goodness unconceivably great<sup>n</sup>; and there are probably divers others (stones, metals, minerals, &c.) no less obvious, even here upon the earth, our place of dwelling, which, were our senses able to discern their constitution and texture, would afford matter of the same acknowledgment.

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II. But if, passing from such particulars, we observe the relation of several kinds of things each to other, we shall find more reason to be convinced concerning the same excellent perfections further extending themselves. By such comparison we may easily discern, that what speaks much of art in itself singly considered, declares more thereof in respect to other things; and that many things, in which, separately looked upon, we could perceive but small artifice, have, indeed, much of it in such relation; (which although seeming in themselves mean and despicable, are yet very useful and necessary to considerable purposes, in subserviency to the convenience of more noble beings;) and though perhaps we cannot thoroughly penetrate the relative use and design of everything, which hangs up before us in nature's shop, (by reason of our incapacity, or unskilfulness in her trade,) yet we shall have reason, from what we can plainly discover, to collect, that each piece there is a tool accommodate to some use. Is there not, for instance, a palpable relation between the frame, the temper, the natural inclinations, or instincts, of each animal, and its element, or natural place and

<sup>n</sup> Νῆ τὸν Δία καὶ τοὺς Θεοὺς, ἐν τῶν γεγονότων ἀπῆρκει πρὸς τὸ αἰσθίσθαι τῆς προνοίας, τῷ γε αἰδήμονι, καὶ εὐχαρίστῳ.—Epict. Diss. I. 16. [7.]

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abode; wherein it can only live, finding therein its food, its harbour, its refuge? Is not to each faculty within (or to each sensitive organ) an object without prepared, exactly correspondent thereto<sup>o</sup>; which were it wanting, the faculty would become vain and useless, yea sometime harmful and destructive; as reciprocally the object would import little or nothing, if such a faculty were not provided and suited thereto? As for example, what would an eye (or the visive power) signify, if there were not light prepared to render things visible thereto? and how much less considerable than it is would the goodly light itself be, were all things in nature blind, and incapable to discern thereby? What would the ear serve for, if the air were not suitably disposed (made neither too thick nor too thin; neither too resty nor too fleeting, but) in a due consistency, and capable of moderate undulations distinguishable thereby? The like we might with the same reason inquire concerning the other senses and faculties, vital or animal, and their respective objects, which we may observe with admirable congruity respecting each other. Have not all those goodly colours, and comely shapes, which in the leaves, the flowers, and the fruits of plants (I might add in gems and precious stones; yea in all sorts of living creatures) we behold, an evident respect to the sight, and the sight a no less visible reference to them? Those

<sup>o</sup> Χρώματα ὁ Θεὸς εἰ πεποιήκει, δύναμιν δὲ θεατικὴν αὐτῶν μὴ πεποιήκει, τί ἂν ᾔην ὄφελος; οὐδ' ὁτιοῦν. ἀλλ' ἀνάπαλιν, εἰ τὴν μὲν δύναμιν πεποιήκει, τὰ ὄντα δὲ μὴ τοιαῦτα, ὅλα ὑποπίπτειν τῇ δυνάμει τῇ ὁρατικῇ, καὶ οὕτω τι ὄφελος; οὐδ' ὁτιοῦν. τί δ', εἰ καὶ ἀμφότερα ταῦτα πεποιήκει, φῶς δὲ μὴ πεποιήκει; οὐδ' οὕτω τι ὄφελος. τίς οὖν ὁ ἀρμόσας τοῦτο πρὸς ἐκείνο, καὶ ἐκείνο πρὸς τοῦτο;—Epict. Diss. 1. 6. [3—6.]

many kinds of pleasant fragrancy in herbs, flowers, and spices, have they not a like manifest relation to the smell, and it to them? Could all that great variety of wholesome, savoury, and delicious fruits, herbs, grains, pulses, seeds, and roots, become so constantly produced, otherwise than for the purpose of feeding and sustaining living creatures with pleasure and content? Is there not a notorious correspondence between them and the organs of taste, digestion, and nutrition? Are there not appetites prompting, yea with intolerable pain provoking each living creature to seek its proper sustenance; and doth it not find in the enjoyment hereof a pleasure and satisfaction unexpressible? Let me add: whence comes it to pass, that ordinarily in nature nothing occurs noisome or troublesome to any sense; but all things wholesome and comfortable, at least innocent or inoffensive? that we may wander all about without being urged to shut our eyes, to stop our ears, our mouths, our noses; but rather invited to open all the avenues of our soul, for admission of the kind entertainments nature sets before us? Doth she not everywhere present spectacles of delight (somewhat of lively picture, somewhat of gay embroidery, somewhat of elegant symmetry) to our eyes, however seldom anything appears horrid or ugly to them? Where is it that we meet with noises so violent, or so jarring, as to offend our ears; is not there rather provided for us, wherever we go, some kind of harmony grateful to them; not only in fields and woods the sweet chirping of birds; by rivers the soft warbling of the streams; but even the rude winds whistle in a tune not unpleasant; the tossing seas

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yield a kind of solemn and graver melody? All the air about us, is it not (not only not noisome to our smell, but) very comfortable and refreshing; and doth not even the dirty earth yield a wholesome and medicinal scent? So many, so plain, so exactly congruous are the relations of things here about us each to other; which surely could not otherwise come than from one admirable wisdom and power conspiring thus to adapt and connect them together; as also from an equal goodness, declared in all these things being squared so fitly for mutual benefit and convenience. These considerations are applicable to all (even to the meaner sorts of) animals; which being the only creatures capable of joy and pleasure, or liable to grief and pain, it was fit, that insensible things should be disposed to serve their needs and uses; which hath been with so wonderful a care performed, that of so vast a number among them there is none so vile or contemptible (no worm, no fly, no insect,) for whose maintenance, whose defence, whose satisfaction, competent (shall I say, or abundant?) provision hath not been made, both intrinsical (by a frame of organs fitting them to obtain and to enjoy what is good for them, to shun and repel what is bad; by strong appetites inciting them to search after and pursue, or to beware and decline respectively; by strange instincts enabling them to distinguish between what is fit for them to procure or embrace, to remove or avoid;) and extrinsical also, by a great variety of conveniences, answerable to their several desires and needs, dispersed all about, and everywhere, as it were, offered to them. So that the holy Psalmist (considering this,

and taking upon him to be, as it were, their chap-  
lain) had reason to say this grace for them: *The*  
*eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them*  
*their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand,*  
*and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.* But  
especially (that which as reason enables us, so due  
gratitude obliges us, and prompts us especially to  
observe) there is an evident regard (so evident,  
that even Pliny, a professed Epicurean, could not  
forbear acknowledging it) which all things bear to  
man, the prince of creatures visible<sup>p</sup>; they being  
all as on purpose ordered to yield tribute unto  
him; to supply his wants, to gratify his desires;  
with profit and pleasure to exercise his faculties;  
to content, as it were, even his humour and curio-  
sity<sup>q</sup>. All things about us do minister (or at least  
may do so, if we would improve the natural instru-  
ments, and the opportunities afforded us) to our  
preservation, ease, or delight. The hidden bowels  
of the earth yield us treasures of metals and mi-  
nerals, quarries of stone and coal, so necessary, so  
serviceable to divers good uses, that we could not  
commodiously be without them; the vilest and  
most common stones we tread on (even in that we  
tread on them) are useful, and serve to many good  
purposes beside: the surface of the earth how is

<sup>p</sup> Principium jure tribuetur homini, cujus causa videtur cuncta  
alia genuisse natura.—Plin. Hist. Nat. [Lib. vii. cap. i.]

Ut omnia rerum naturæ pars tributum aliquod nobis confer-  
ret —Sen. de Benef. iv. 5. [1.]

<sup>q</sup> Neque enim necessitatibus tantummodo nostris provisum est;  
usque in delicias amamur.—Id. Ibid.

Ut interdum Proncea nostra Epicurea fuisse videatur.—Cic. de  
Nat. Deor. ii. [64.]

Vera est sententia Stoicorum, qui aiunt nostra causa mundum  
esse constructum. Omnia enim, quibus constat, quæque generat

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it bespread all over, as a table well furnished, with variety of delicate fruits, herbs, and grains to nourish our bodies, to please our tastes, to cheer our spirits, to cure our diseases? how many fragrant and beautiful flowers offer themselves for the comfort of our smell and the delight of our sight? Neither can our ears complain, since every wood breeds a quire of natural musicians, ready to entertain them with easy and unaffected harmony. The woods, I say, which also adorned with stately trees afford us a pleasant view and a refreshing shade, shelter from weather and sun, fuel for our fires, materials for our houses and our shipping; with divers other needful utensils. Even the barren mountains send us down fresh streams of water, so necessary to the support of our lives, so profitable for the fructification of our grounds, so commodious for conveyance of our wares, and maintaining intercourse among us. Yea the wide seas are not (altogether unprofitable) wastes; but freely yield us, without our tillage, many rich harvests, transmitting our commerce and traffick, furnishing our tables with stores of dainty fish, supplying the bottles of heaven with waters to refresh the earth, being inexhaustible cisterns, from whence our rivers and fountains are derived; the very

Ps. cxlviii. 8. rude and boisterous winds themselves fulfil God's word, (which once commanded all things to be good, and approved them to be so,) by yielding manifold services to us; in brushing and cleansing the air for our health, in driving forward our ships, (which without their friendly help could not stir,)

ex se mundus, ad utilitatem hominis accommodata sunt.—Lact. de Ira Dei, cap. xiii.

in gathering together, in scattering, in spreading abroad the clouds; the clouds, those paths of God, which drop fatness upon our fields and pastures. As for our living subjects, all the inferior sorts of animals, it is hardly possible to reckon the manifold benefits we receive from them; how many ways they supply our needs with pleasant food and convenient clothing, how they ease our labour, how they promote even our recreation and sport. Thus have all things upon this earth (as is fit and seemly they should have) by the wise and gracious disposal of the great Creator a reference to the benefit of its noblest inhabitant, most worthy and most able to use them: many of them have an immediate reference to man, (as necessary to his being, or conducive to his well-being; being fitted thereto, to his hand, without his care, skill or labour,) others a reference to him, more mediate, indeed, yet as reasonable to suppose; I mean such things, whose usefulness doth in part depend upon the exercise of our reason, and the instruments subservient thereto: for what is useful by the help of reason doth as plainly refer to the benefit of a thing naturally endowed with that faculty, as what is agreeable to sense refers to a thing merely sensitive: we may therefore, for instance, as reasonably suppose, that iron was designed for our use, though first we be put to dig for it, then must employ many arts, and much pains before it become fit for our use; as that the stones were therefore made, which lie open to our view<sup>r</sup>; and which without any preparation we easily apply to the pavement of our streets, or the raising of our

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Ps. lxxv. 11,  
12, &c.

<sup>r</sup> Cf. Epict. i. 16.



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fences: also, the grain we sow in our grounds, or the trees which we plant in our orchards, we have reason to conceive as well provided for us, as those plants which grow wildly and spontaneously; for that sufficient means are bestowed on us of compassing such ends, and rendering those things useful to us, (a reason able to contrive what is necessary in order thereto, and a hand ready to execute,) it being also reasonable, that something should be left for the improvement of our reason, and employment of our industry, lest our noblest powers should languish and decay by sloth, or want of fit exercise<sup>a</sup>.

Well then, is it to a fortuitous necessity (or a necessary chance) that we owe all these choice accommodations and preeminences of nature? must we bless and worship fortune for all this? did she so especially love us, and tender our good? was she so indulgent toward us, so provident for us in so many things, in everything; making us the scope of all her workings and motions here about us? must we change style, and say, fortune pours down blessings on our heads, fortune crowns us with lovingkindness, fortune daily loads us with her benefits? Shall we not only esteem these good things her gifts, but even acknowledge ourselves her offsprings, and reverence her as our mother; disclaiming so noble a parent, as Wisdom Omnipotent; disowning so worthy a benefactor, as Sovereign Goodness? O brutish degeneracy! O hellish

<sup>a</sup> Pater ipse colendi  
Haud facilem esse viam voluit;  
..... curis acuens mortalia corda.

Virg. [Georg. i. 121.]

depravedness of mind! Are we not, not only SERM.  
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wretchedly blind and stupid, if we are not able to discern so clear beams of wisdom shining through so many perspicuous correspondences; if we cannot trace the Divine power by footsteps so express and remarkable; if we cannot read so legible characters of transcendent goodness<sup>t</sup>; but extremely unworthy and ungrateful, if we are not ready to acknowledge, and with hearty thankfulness to celebrate all these excellent perfections, by which all these things have been so ordered, as to conspire and co-operate for our benefit? Methinks the very perception of so much good, the continual enjoyment of so many accommodations, the frequent satisfaction of so many senses and appetites, should put us in so good humour, that when we feel our hearts replenished with food and gladness, when we so delightfully relish nature's dainties, when we with pleasure view this fair scene of things, when our ears are ravished with harmonious sounds, when our spirits are exhilarated with those natural perfumes shed about our gardens, our woods, and our fields, we should not be able to forbear devoutly crying out with the Psalmist; *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches: The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy and bounty: Lord, what is man, that thou art so mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou makest such account of him? that thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, and hast put all things under his feet? Under his feet; and such in a manner, according to proper and direct meaning,*

Ps. civ. 24;

cxix. 64;

xxxiii. 5;

viii. 4;

cxliv. 3;

viii. 6.

<sup>t</sup> Οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον ἑαυτὸν ἀφήκεν, ἀγαθοποιῶν, &c.—Acts xiv. 17.

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are all those things which we have as yet touched upon; so many arguments of the Divinity even looking downwards, as it were, (if we do not so look rather like beasts than men,) we may upon this little spot of our habitation perceive. But if, employing our peculiar advantage, we lift up our eyes and minds towards heaven, there in a larger volume, and in a brighter character, we shall behold the testimonies of perfection, and majesty stupendous described: as our eyes are dazzled with the radiant light coming thence, so must the vast amplitude, the stately beauty, the decent order, the steady course, the beneficial efficacy of those glorious lamps astonish our minds, fixing their attention upon them; he that shall, I say, consider with what precise regularity and what perfect constancy those (beyond our imagination) vast bodies perform their rapid motions, what pleasure, comfort, and advantage their light and heat do yield us; how their kindly influences conduce to the general preservation of all things here below, (impregnating the womb of this cold and dull lump of earth with various sorts of life, with strange degrees of activity;) how necessary (or how convenient at least) the certain recourses of seasons made by them are; how can he but wonder, and wondering adore that transcendancy of beneficent wisdom and power, which first disposed them into, which still preserves them in such a state and order? That all of them should be so regulated, as for so many ages together, (even through all memories of time,) to persist in the same posture, to retain the same appearances, not to alter discernibly in magnitude, in shape, in situation, in

distance each from other; but to abide fixed, as it were, in their unfixedness, and steady in their restless motions; not to vary at all sensibly in the time of their revolution, (so that one year was ever observed to differ in an hour, or one day in a minute from another;) doth it not argue a constant will directing them, and a mighty hand upholding them<sup>u</sup>? It did so, Plutarch tells us, to the common apprehensions of men in ancient times; who from these observations deduced the existence and notion of a God; because, saith he, they took notice that the sun, the moon, and the rest of the stars, taking their course about the earth, did constantly arise alike in their colours, equal in their bignesses, in the same places, and at the same times<sup>x</sup>. Reason dictated to them what the inspired Psalmist sings concerning the heavenly host; that God commanded, and they were created; he hath also established them for ever and ever, by a decree that shall not pass. And surely, those celestial squadrons could never be ranged in a form so proper, and march on so regularly without the marshalling and without the conduct of a most skilful captain. He that can seriously ascribe all this to an

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Ps. cxlviii.  
5, 6.

Isai. xl. 26;

<sup>u</sup> Ordo autem siderum, et in omni æternitate constantia, neque naturam significat; est enim plena rationis: neque fortunam, quæ amica varietati constantiam respuit.—Cic. de Nat. Deor. ii. [16.]

Οὐδέποτε οὖν ἐν χειμῶνι μακρὰ γέγονεν ἡ ἡμέρα, ὥσπερ οὐδέποτε ἐν θέρει μακρὰ γέγονεν ἡ νύξ, τοσοῦτων παρελθουσῶν γενεῶν ἀλλὰ ἐν τοσοῦτῃ διαστήματι καὶ μήκει, οὐδὲ ἀκαριαῖον, οὐχ ἡμῶριον, οὐ ρεπὴν ὀφθαλμοῦ ἡ ἐτέρα τὴν ἐτέρα ἐπλεονέκτησε.—Chrys. Ἀνθρ. θ' [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 522.]

<sup>x</sup> Ἀεὶ τε γὰρ ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν ἀστρῶν, τὴν ὑπόγειον φορὰν ἐνεχθέντα, ὁμοία μὲν ἀνατέλλει τοῖς χρώμασιν, ἴσα δὲ τοῖς μεγέθεσι, καὶ κατὰ τόπους καὶ κατὰ χρόνους τοὺς αὐτοὺς.—Plut. de Plac. i. 6. [Opp. Tom. ix. p. 487. Ed. Reisk.]

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Isai. xlv.

12.

Dan. iv.

35.

Neh. ix. 6.

undisciplined and uncondacted troop of atoms rambling up and down confusedly through the field of infinite space, what might he not as easily assert or admit? Certainly, he that can think so, can think anything; and labour were vainly spent in further endeavour to convince him. So even Pagan Philosophers have judged; upon whom what impression this consideration hath made, we may learn from these words of one among them, Cicero: *Who, saith he, would call him a man, that beholding such certain motions of heaven, thus settled ranks of stars, - all things there so connected and suited together, should deny there were a reason in them, or should affirm those things done by chance, which by no understanding we can reach with how great counsel they are performed?* And, *What other thing, adds he, can be so open and so perspicuous to us that shall behold the heavens and contemplate things celestial, as that there is a most excellent Divinity, by which these things are governed?* Thus *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork: yea, thus we have reason to acknowledge with Nehemiah:*

Ps. xix.

I.

⁊ Quis enim hunc hominem dixerit, qui cum tam certos cœli motus, tam ratos astrorum ordines, tamque inter se connexa et apta viderit, neget in his ullam inesse rationem, eaque casu fieri dicat, quæ quanto consilio gerantur, nullo consilio assequi possumus?—Cic. de Nat. Deor. II. [38.]

Quid enim potest esse tam apertum, tamque perspicuum, cum cœlum suspeximus, cœlestiaque contemplati sumus, quam esse aliquod numen præstantissimæ mentis, quo hæc regantur?—II. [2.]

Τίς οὖν οὕτως ἀθλίος καὶ ταλαίπωρος, ὥς ὁρῶν μὲν οὐρανὸν, ὁρῶν δὲ θάλατταν καὶ γῆν, ὁρῶν δὲ τοσαύτην ὥρῶν εὐκрасίαν οὕτως ἀκριβῆ, καὶ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς ἀδιάπτωτον τάξιν, νομίζειν αὐτομάτως ταῦτα γίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ μὴ προσκυνεῖν τὸν ἅπαντα ταῦτα μετὰ σοφίας τῆς προσηκούσης διαταξάμενον; Chrys. Ἀνδρ. θ'. ut supra.

*Thou, even thou, art the Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts; the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein; and thou preservest them all.*

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Neh. ix. 6.  
Isai.  
xxxvii. 16.

Thus, everything above and below us, before and behind, on this, on that, on every side of us, yields more than a simple attestation to the existence of its glorious Maker<sup>2</sup>; each of them singly, several of them together, giving their vote and suffrage thereto.

III. Yea, which was the last consideration intimated, all of them join together in one universal consort, with one harmonious voice, to proclaim one and the same wisdom to have designed, one and the same power to have produced, one and the same goodness to have set both wisdom and power on work in designing and in producing their being<sup>3</sup>; in preserving and governing it: for this whole system of things what is it, but one goodly body, as it were, compacted of several members and organs; so aptly compacted together, that each confers its being and its operation to the grace and ornament, to the strength and stability of the whole; one soul (of Divine Providence) enlivening in a manner, and actuating it all? Survey it all over, and we shall have reason to say with the Philosopher; *All the parts of the world are so constituted, that they could not be either better for use, nor more beautiful for shew<sup>b</sup>.* In it we shall

<sup>2</sup> Quocunque te flexeris, ibi Deum videbis occurrentem tibi, &c.—Sen. de Benef. iv. 8. [2.]

<sup>3</sup> Ἐποίησεν ὡς ἀγαθὸς τὸ χρήσιμον, ὡς σοφὸς τὸ κάλλιστον, ὡς δυνατὸς τὸ μέγιστον.—Bas. in Hexaem. Hom. i. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 8. A.]

<sup>b</sup> Omnes mundi partes ita constitutæ sunt, ut neque ad usum meliores potuerint esse, nec ad speciem pulchriores.—Cic. de Nat. Deor. ii. [34.]

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espy nothing in substance superfluous or defective; nothing in shape deformed, in position misplaced, in motion exorbitant, so as to prejudice the beauty or welfare of the whole<sup>o</sup>. We may perhaps not discern the use of each part, or the tendency of each particular effect; but of many they are so plain and palpable, that reason obliges us to suppose the like of the rest. Even as a person whom we observe frequently to act with great consideration and prudence, when at other times we cannot penetrate the drift of his proceedings, we must yet imagine that he hath some latent reason, some reach of policy, that we are not aware of; or, as in an engine consisting of many parts, curiously combined, whereof we do perceive the general use, and apprehend how divers parts thereof conduce thereto, reason prompts us (although we neither see them all, nor can comprehend the immediate serviceableness of some) to think they are all in some way or other subservient to the artist's design: such an agent is God, the wisdom of whose proceedings being in so many instances notorious, we ought to suppose it answerable in the rest; such an engine is this world, of which we may easily enough discern the general end, and how many of its parts do conduce thereto; and cannot therefore in reason but suppose the rest in their kind alike congruous, and conducive to the same purpose: our incapacity to discover all doth not argue any defect, but an excess of wisdom in the design thereof; not too little perfection in the work, but too great an one rather, in respect to our capacity: however, we

<sup>o</sup> Ἡ φύσις μήτε ποιῇ μάτην, μήθεν μήτε ἀπολείπει τῶν ἀναγκαίων.  
—Arist. de Anim. iii. [9.]

plainly see the result of all to be the durable continuance of things, without interruption or change, in the same constant uniform state; which shews, that in the world there is no seed of corruption, as it were<sup>d</sup>; no inclination to dissolution or decay; nothing that tends to the discomposure or destruction of the whole: each ingredient thereof (of those so unconceivably numerous) consists within its proper limits; not encroaching immoderately upon, not devouring or disturbing another in its course; contrary qualities therein serving to a due temperament, opposite inclinations begetting a just poise, particular vicissitudes conferring to a general settlement; private deaths and corruptions maintaining the public life and health, producing a kind of youthful vigour in the whole<sup>e</sup>: so that six thousand years together hath this great machine stood, always one and the same, unimpaired in its beauty, unworn in its parts, unwearied and undisturbed in its motions<sup>f</sup>. If then, as Plutarch says, *No fair thing is ever produced by hazard, but with art framing it*<sup>g</sup>; how could this most fair compre-

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<sup>d</sup> ῥύσεις καὶ ἀλλοιώσεις ἀναρεοῦσι τὸν κόσμον διηλεκῶς.—Anton. vi. 16.

Αἱ μὲν γενέσεις ἐπαναστέλλουσι τὰς φθοράς, αἱ δὲ φθοραὶ κουφίζουσι τὰς γενέσεις· μία δ' ἐκ πάντων περαινομένην (περαινομένη) σωτηρίᾳ διατελεῖ (διὰ τέλους).—Auct. de Mund. cap. v.

<sup>e</sup> Omnia pereundo servantur; omnia de interitu reformantur. &c.—Tertull. Apol. cap. XLVIII. [Opp. 38 c.]

<sup>f</sup> Ὁ μέγας καὶ θαυμαστός τῆς μεγαλειότητος αὐτοῦ κήρυξ.—Greg. Naz. Orat. XLV. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 837 A.]

<sup>g</sup> Ἐκαστον μένει, καθάπερ τινὶ χαλινῷ καὶ δεσμῷ, τῷ βουλήματι τοῦ ποιήσαντος τοὺς οἰκέλους διαφύλαττον ὄρους, καὶ ἡ μάχη τούτων εἰρήνης αἰτία γίνεται τῷ παντί.—Chrys. Orat. XLVII. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 524.]

<sup>h</sup> Οὐδὲν γὰρ τῶν καλῶν εἰκῇ, καὶ ὥς ἔτυχε, γίνεται, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τινος τέχνης δημιουργούσης.—Plut. de Plac. l. 6. [Opp. Tom. ix. p. 485. Ed. Reisk.]



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hension of all fair things be not the lawful issue of art, but a by-blow of fortune; of fortune, the mother only of broods monstrous and misshapen<sup>h</sup>? If the nature of any cause be discoverable by its effects; if from any work we may infer the workman's ability; if in any case the results of wisdom are distinguishable from the consequences of chance, we have reason to believe, that the Architect of this magnificent and beautiful frame was one incomprehensibly wise, powerful, and good Being<sup>i</sup>; and to conclude with Cicero, *Esse præstantem aliquam æternamque naturam, et eam suscipiendam, admirandamque hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi, ordoque rerum cælestium cogit confiteri*<sup>k</sup>; the sense of which saying we cannot better render or express, than in St Paul's words: *The invisible things of God by the making* (or rather by the make and constitution) *of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead*; so that, I adjoin after him, they are inexcusable, who from hence do not know God; or knowing him do not render unto him his due glory and service.

Rom. i. 20.

<sup>h</sup> Quod si mundum efficere potest concursus atomorum, cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur urbem non potest, quæ sunt minus operosa, et multo quidem faciliora?—Cic. de Nat. Deor. II. [37.]

<sup>i</sup> .... Καλὸν ποίκιλμα τέκτονος σοφοῦ.—

Euripides [Critias apud. Plut. de Plac. 1. 6. Opp. Tom. IX. p. 486. Ed. Reisk.]

Ἀπιστορέχνης.—Epitheton Dei. Pind. [Fr. 29.]

<sup>k</sup> [De Divin. II. 72.]

## I Believe in God.

### SERMON VII.

#### THE BEING OF GOD PROVED FROM THE FRAME OF HUMAN NATURE.

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GEN. I. 27.

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of  
God created he him.*

THE belief of God's existence is the foundation SERM.  
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of all Religion, if which be not well laid in our minds by convincing reasons, the superstructures standing thereon may easily be in danger of being shaken and ruined; especially being assailed by the winds of temptation and opposition, which everywhere blow so violently in this irreligious age. No discourses therefore can perhaps be more needful, (or seasonably useful,) than such as do produce and urge reasons of that kind, apt to establish that foundation. Of such there be, I conceive, none better, or more suitable to common capacity, than those, which are drawn from effects apparent to men's general observation and experience, the which cannot reasonably be ascribed to any other cause, than unto God; that is, (according to the notion commonly answering to that name,) to a Being incomprehensibly wise, powerful, and good. Of such effects there be innumerable many in this sensible world among things natural,

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more strictly so called, that is, subsisting and acting without immediate use of understanding or choice; the constitutions and operations of which (being evidently directed according to very much reason, and to very good purpose) do evince their being framed and ordered by such a Being; as I have formerly, [in this place] with a competent largeness, endeavoured to shew. But beside those, there is exposed to our observation, yea subject to our inward conscience, another sort of beings, acting in another manner, and from other principles; having in them a spring of voluntary motion and activity; not, as the rest, necessarily determined, or driven on, by a kind of blind violence, in one direct road to one certain end; but guiding themselves with judgment and choice, by several ways, toward divers ends; briefly, endued with reason, to know what and why; and with liberty, to choose what and how they should act; and that this sort of beings (that is, we ourselves, all mankind) did proceed from the same source or original cause, as it is in way of History delivered and affirmed in our text, so I shall now endeavour by reason (apt to persuade even those who would not allow this sacred authority) to shew. Indeed, if the *Eternal power and divinity of God may*, as St Paul tells us, *be seen in all the works of God*; the same peculiarly and principally will appear observable in this masterpiece, as it were, of the great Artificer; if the meanest creatures reflect somewhat of light, by which we may discern the Divine existence and perfections; in this fine and best polished mirror we shall more clearly discover the same: nowhere so much of God will appear

Rom. i. 20.

as in this work, which was designedly formed to resemble and represent him. This then is the subject of our present Discourse, That in man, well considered, we may discern manifest footsteps of that incomprehensibly excellent Being impressed upon him; and this doubly, both in each man singly taken, and in men as standing in conjunction or relation to each other: considering man's nature, we shall have reason to think it to have proceeded from God; considering human societies, we shall see cause to suppose them designed and governed by God.

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I. Consider we first any one single man, or that human nature abstractedly, whereof each individual person doth partake; and whereas that doth consist of two parts, one material and external, whereby man becomes a sensible part of nature, and hath an eminent station among visible creatures; the other, that interior and invisible principle of operations peculiarly called human: as to the former, we did, among other such parts of nature, take cognizance thereof, and even in that discovered plain marks of a great wisdom that made it, of a great goodness taking care to maintain it. The other now we shall chiefly consider, in which we may discern not only σημεία, but ὁμοιώματα, of the Divine existence and efficiency; not only large tracks, but express footsteps; not only such signs as smoke is of fire, or a picture of the painter that drew it; but even such, as the spark is of fire, and the picture of its original.

I And first, that man's nature did proceed from some efficient cause, it will (as of other things of nature) be reasonable to suppose. For

SERM. if not so, then it must either spring up of itself, so  
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 from all eternity, some one man, or some number  
 of men did of themselves exist; or there hath been  
 a succession, without beginning, of continual gene-  
 rations indeterminate, (not terminated in any root,  
 one or more, of singular persons.)

Now generally, that man did not at any time in  
 any manner spring up of himself, appears, 1 From  
 History and common tradition; which (as we shall  
 elsewhere largely shew) deliver the contrary;  
 being therein more credible than bare conjecture or  
 precarious assertion, destitute of testimony or  
 proof. 2 From the present constant manner of  
 man's production, which is not by spontaneous  
 emergency, but in way of successive derivation,  
 according to a method admirably provided for by  
 nature. 3 Because if ever man did spring up of  
 himself, it should be reasonable that at any time,  
 that often, that at least sometime in so long a  
 course of times, the like should happen, which yet  
 no experience doth attest. 4 There is an evident  
 relation between our bodies and souls; the mem-  
 bers and organs of our bodies being wonderfully  
 adapted to serve the operations of our souls. Now  
 in our bodies (as we have before shewed) there  
 appear plain arguments of a most wise Author  
 that contrived and framed them; therefore in no  
 likelihood did our souls arise of themselves, but  
 owe their being to the same wise Cause.

Also particularly, that not any men did at some  
 beginning of time spring up of themselves is  
 evident, because there is even in the thing itself a  
 repugnance; and it is altogether unconceivable that

anything, which once hath not been, should ever come to be without receiving its being from another: and supposing such a rise of anything, there could not in any case be any need of an efficient cause; since anything might purely out of nothing come to be of itself.

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Neither could any man so exist from eternity, both from the general reasons assigned, which being grounded in the nature of the thing, and including no respect to this circumstance of now and then, do equally remove this supposition, (for what is in itself unapt or unnecessary or improbable to be now, was always alike so; the being from eternity or in time not altering the nature of the thing;) and also particularly, because there are no footsteps or monuments of man's (not to say eternal, but even) ancient standing in the world; but rather many good arguments (otherwhere touched) of his late coming thereinto; which consideration did even convince Epicurus and his followers, and made them acknowledge man to be a novel production. I add, seeing it is necessary to suppose some eternal and self-subsistent Being distinct from man, and from any other particular sensible being, (for there is no such being, which in reason can be supposed author of the rest; but rather all of them bear characters signifying their original from a Being more excellent than themselves;) and such an one being admitted, there is no need or reason to suppose any other; (especially man and all others appearing unapt so to subsist,) therefore it is not reasonable to ascribe eternal self-subsistence to man. This discourse I confirm with the suffrage of Aristotle himself; who in his

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Physics hath these words : *In natural things, that which is definite and better, if possible, must rather exist : but it suffices, that one, the first of things immoveable, being eternal, should be to others the original of motion*<sup>a</sup>; (I subjoin, and by parity of reason it is sufficient, that one and the best thing be eternally subsistent of itself, and the cause of subsistence to the rest.)

As for the last supposition, that there have been indeterminate successions of men, without beginning, it is also liable to most of the former exceptions, beside that it is altogether unintelligible, and its having this peculiar difficulty in it, that it ascribes determinate effects to causes indeterminate. And, indeed, it hath been to no other purpose introduced, than to evade the arguments arising from the nature of the thing, by confounding the matter with impertinent intrigues, such as the terms of infinite and indeterminate must necessarily produce in man's shallow understanding. I therefore, upon such grounds, assume it as a reasonable supposition, that man's nature is nowise *αὐτοφυής*, (hath not sprung up of itself,) but hath proceeded from some cause.

2 I adjoin, secondly, that it could not come from any sensible or material cause, nor from any complication of such causes; for that the properties, the powers, the operations of man's soul are wholly different from in kind, highly elevated in worth above all the properties, powers, and operations of things corporeal, in what imaginable

<sup>a</sup> Ἐν γὰρ τοῖς φύσει, δεῖ τὸ πεπερασμένον καὶ τὸ βέλτιστον, εἰ ἐνδέχεται, ὑπάρχειν μᾶλλον. Ἰκανὸν δέ, καὶ εἰ ἓν, ὃ πρῶτον τῶν ἀκινήτων αἰδίων ὄν, ἔσται ἀρχὴ τοῖς ἄλλοις κινήσεως.—Physic. Auscult. viii. 6. [4.]

manner soever framed or tempered: the properties, faculties, and operations of our souls are, or refer to, several sorts or ways of knowledge, (sense, fancy, memory, discourse, mental intuition;) of willing, (that is, of appetite toward and choice of good, or of disliking and refusing evil;) of passion, (that is, of sensible complacency or displeasure in respect to good and evil apprehended under several notions and circumstances;) of *αὐτοκίνησις*, or self-moving, (the power and act of moving without any force extrinsical working upon it.) The general properties of things corporeal are extension according to several dimensions and figures; aptness to receive motion from, or to impart motion unto each other in several degrees and proportions of velocity; to divide and unite, or to be divided and united each by other; and the like, coherent with and resulting from those: now to common sense it seems evident, that those properties and these are *toto genere* different from each other; nor have any conceivable similitude unto, connexion with, dependence upon each other, as to their immediate nature. Let any part of this corporeal mass be refined by the subtlest division, let it be agitated by the quickest motion, let it be modelled into what shape or fashion you please; how can any man imagine either knowledge or appetite or passion thence to result? or that it should thence acquire a power of moving itself, or another adjacent body? Even, I say, this inferior locomotive faculty is too high for matter, by any change it can undergo, to obtain: for we (as inward experience, or conscience of what we do may teach us) determine ourselves commonly to action, and move the



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corporeal instruments subject to our will and command, not by force of any precedent bodily impression or impulse, but either according to mere pleasure, or in virtue of somewhat spiritual and abstracted from matter, acting upon us, not by a physical energy, but by moral representation, in a manner more easily conceived than expressed; (for no man surely is so dull, that he cannot perceive a huge difference between being dragged by a violent hand, and drawn to action by a strong reason; although it may puzzle him to express that difference:) such a proposition of truth, such an apprehension of events possible, such an appearance of good or evil consequent, (things nowhere existent without us, nor having in them anything of corporeal subsistence; nor therefore capable of corporeal operation,) are all the engines that usually impel us to action; and these, by a voluntary application of our minds, (by collecting and digesting, severing and rejecting, sifting and moulding the present single representations of things, by an immediate interior power, independent from anything without us,) we frame within ourselves. And even such a self-moving or self-determining power we cannot anyway conceive to be in, or to arise from any part of this corporeal mass, however shaped or sized, however situated or agitated: much less can we well apprehend the more noble faculties to be seated in or to spring from it; of them the grossest and the finest, the slowest and the nimblest, the roughest and the smoothest bodies are alike capable, or rather unlike incapable. To think a gross body may be ground and pounded into rationality, a slow body may be thumped and

driven into passion, a rough body may be filed and polished into a faculty of discerning and resenting things; that a cluster of pretty thin round atoms, (as Democritus forsooth conceited,) that a well-mixed combination of elements, (as Empedocles fancied<sup>b</sup>,) that a harmonious contemperation (or *crasis*) of humours, (as Galen, dreaming it seems upon his drugs and his potions, would persuade us,) that an implement made up of I know not what fine springs, and wheels, and such mechanic knacks, (as some of our modern wizards have been busy in divining,) should, without more to do, become the subject of so rare capacities and endowments, the author of actions so worthy, and works so wonderful; capable of wisdom and virtue, of knowledge so vast, and of desires so lofty; apt to contemplate truth, and affect good; able to recollect things past, and to foresee things future; to search so deep into the causes of things, and disclose so many mysteries of nature; to invent so many arts and sciences, to contrive such projects of policy, and achieve such feats of prowess; briefly, should become capable to design, undertake, and perform all those admirable effects of human wit and industry which we daily see and hear of; how senseless and absurd conceits are these? how can we, without great indignation and regret, entertain such suppositions? No, no; it is both ridiculous

<sup>b</sup> Arist. de Anima, 1. 2. [Οὔτοι δὲ λέγουσιν τὴν ψυχὴν τὰς ἀρχὰς, οἱ μὲν πλείους ποιούντες, οἱ δὲ μίαν ταύτην, ὥσπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς μὲν ἐκ τῶν στοιχείων πάντων εἶναι δὲ καὶ ἕκαστον ψυχὴν τούτων, λέγων οὕτω

γαῖη μὲν γὰρ γαῖαν ὁπάπαμεν, ὕδατι δ' ὕδωρ  
αἰθέρι δ' αἰθέρα διαν, ἀτὰρ πυρὶ πῦρ αἰδήλον,  
στοργῇ δὲ στοργήν, νεῖκος δὲ τε νεῖκεῖ λυγμῷ]

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fondness and monstrous baseness for us to own any parentage from, or any alliance to things so mean, so very much below us. It is, indeed, observable, that no man can well, or scarce any man hath disowned the receiving his being from God, but hath also in a manner disavowed his own being what he is; that no man, denying God, hath not also withal denied himself; denied himself to be a man; renounced his reason, his liberty, and other perfections of his nature; rather than acknowledge himself so well descended, hath been ready to confess himself no more than a beast, yea much less than probably beasts are; a mere corporeal machine, a ball of fate and chance, a thing violently tossed and tumbled up and down by bodies all about it. But let these degenerate men vilify their own nature, and disparage themselves as they please, yet those noble perfections of our soul speak its extraction from a higher stock; we cannot, if we consider them well, but acknowledge that,

*Mentem e cœlesti demissam traximus arce;*

or, as Epicharmus<sup>c</sup> said of old, that, *Man's reason did sprout from the Divine reason*; they plainly discover their original to be from a cause itself understanding and knowing, willing freely, resenting things, (if I may so speak,) and moving of itself in a more excellent manner and degree.

And, indeed, it is very considerable to our purpose, that while we assert the existence of God, we assert no other thing to be, than such as whereof we can assign a manifest instance or example, as it were, although in degree much inferior; for what

<sup>c</sup> 'Ὁ δὲ γε τὰνθρώπου λόγος πέφυκ' ἀπὸ τοῦ θείου λόγου.—Epicharmus apud Clem. Alex. Strom. v. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 720.]

can in any degree exist, it is not hard to conceive that possible to exist in any degree, how high soever; what is in kind possible, is in any perfection of degree possible; yea, what we see in a lower degree somewhere to exist, doth probably elsewhere exist in higher perfection. There is therefore scarce any attribute commonly ascribed to God, the existence whereof we cannot shew possible, yea very credible, by shewing some degree, (I use this word in a large and popular sense, not regarding scholastical nicety,) some participation, some semblance (or, if you please, some shadow) thereof discernible in man; he being, indeed, a small picture, as it were, wherein God hath drawn and represented himself, giving us to read that of himself in this small volume, which in its proper character and size we could never be able to apprehend; each letter, each line of his excellency being in itself too large for our eye perfectly to view and comprehend.

3 We are, I say, not only God's works, but his children; our souls bearing in their countenance and complexion divers express features of him; especially as at first they were made, and as by improvement of our capacities they may again become. In the substance of man's soul, in its union with things corporeal, in its properties and powers, we may observe divers such resemblances, declaring it in a manner to be what Seneca did say of it, *A little God harboured in human body*<sup>d</sup>. For as God

<sup>d</sup> [Quid aliud voces hunc (animum), quam Deum in humano corpore hospitantem?—Ep. xxxi. 9.]

Quid mirum, noscere mundum

Si possunt homines, quibus est et mundus in ipsis;

Exemplumque Dei quisque est in imagine parva?—

Manil. [Astronom. iv. 893.]

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<sup>1</sup> Tim. vi.  
16.

(inhabiting light inaccessible,) being himself invisible, and subject to no sense, discovers himself by manifold effects of wisdom and power; so doth our soul, itself immediately exposed to no sense, shew itself by many works of art and industry, wherein she imitates nature and the works of God; although her works in fineness and greatness do, indeed, come infinitely short of his.

As God by his presence and influence doth, as the Philosopher<sup>e</sup> speaks, contain and keep together the whole frame of things, so that he withdrawing them, it would fall of itself into corruption and ruin; so doth the soul, by its union and secret energy upon the body, connect the parts of its body, and preserve it from dissolution, which presently, they being removed, doth follow<sup>f</sup>.

As he, in a manner beyond our conception, without any proper extension or composition of parts, doth coexist with, penetrateth, and passeth through all things; so is she, in a manner also unconceivable, everywhere present within her

Διὸ τολμητέον εἰπεῖν τὸν μὲν ἄνθρωπον ἐπίγειον εἶναι θνητὸν θεὸν, τὸν δ' ἐν οὐρανῷ θεὸν, ἀθάνατον ἄνθρωπον.—Herm. Trismeg. [Stob. Eclog. Lib. i. cap. 39. § 8. Tom. i. p. 307. Ed. Gaisford.]

Quem in hoc mundo locum Deus obtinet, hunc in homine animus; quod est illuc materia, id in nobis corpus est.—Sen. Ep. LXV. [24.]

Deum te igitur scito esse: siquidem Deus est, qui viget, qui sentit, qui meminit, qui providet, qui tam regit, et moderatur, et movet id corpus, cui præpositus est, quam hunc mundum ille princeps Deus; et ut mundum ex quadam parte mortalem ipse Deus æternus, sic fragile corpus animus sempiternus movet.—Cic. in Somn. Scip. [cap. viii.]

<sup>e</sup> Περιέχει πᾶσαν φύσιν.—Arist. de Mundo [Probably a quotation from memory for the passage: Περιέχει τὸ θεῖον τὴν ὅλην φύσιν.—Metaph. xi. 8.]

<sup>f</sup> Δοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ τὸ σῶμα συνέχειν: ἐξελθούσης γοῦν διαπνεῖται καὶ σήπεται.—Arist. de An. i. [5.]

bounds, and penetrates all the dimensions of her little world<sup>g</sup>. SERM.  
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As he incomprehensibly, by a word of his mind, or by a mere act of will, doth move the whole frame or any part of nature; so doth she, we cannot tell how, by thinking only, and by willing, wield her body, and determine any member thereof to motion.

As he, not confined by the extension or duration of things, doth at one simple view behold all things, not only present, but past and future, yea, whenever, wherever, however possible; so doth she, making wide excursions out of her narrow mansion in an instant, as it were, or with a marvellous agility transcend any fixed bounds of time or place<sup>h</sup>; surveys in her thought the most remote regions, stopping nowhere, and passing over the world's bounds into spaces void and imaginary; reviews ages long since past, and looks forward into those long after to come; sees things in their causes, and, as it were, beyond them, even the possibility of things that never shall be.

As he performs nothing rashly or vainly<sup>i</sup>, but always with wisest design to the best end; so doth she never set herself on action without some drift, or aim at good apparent to her.

<sup>g</sup> 'Η δὲ ψυχὴ τοῖς τῆς διανοίας κινήμασι πάσῃ κατ' ἐξουσίαν ἐφαπλούται τῇ κτίσει, καὶ μέχρις οὐρανῶν ἀνιούσα, καὶ τῶν ἀβύσσων ἐπιβατεύουσα, καὶ τῷ πλάτει τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐπερχομένη, &c.—Greg. Nyss. Catech. Orat. cap. x. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 497 c.]

<sup>h</sup> Magna et generosa res est humanus animus; nullos sibi poni nisi communes et cum Deo terminos patitur.—Sen. Ep. cii. [21.]

Πῶς μετρῇ τόπῳ, καὶ νοῦς οὐ χωρίζεται, ἀλλ' ἐν τάντῳ μένων πάντα ἐπέρχεται;—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxii. Opp. Tom. x. p. 597 c.]

<sup>i</sup> 'Ο Θεὸς οὐδὲν μάτην ποιεῖ.—Arist.

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As he among all the agitations and changes of things without him abides himself immoveable, impassible, and immutable; so is she, immediately at least, not disturbed, not altered, not affected by the various motions that surround her<sup>k</sup>; they do not touch her, they cannot stir her; among the many tumults and tempests blustering all about her, she can retain a steady calm and rest: Aristotle himself concluded her to be unmoveable, impassible, unmixed, and uncompounded<sup>l</sup>. So fair characters are there of the Divine nature engraven upon men's soul: but one chief property thereof we have not as yet touched; whereof, alas! the lineaments are more faint and less discernible; they being in themselves originally most tender and delicate, and thence apt by our unhappy degeneration to suffer the most, and have thence accordingly been most defaced; goodness, I mean; whereof yet, I shall not doubt to say, many goodly relics are extant, and may be observed therein. There do remain, dispersed in the soil of human nature, divers seeds of goodness, of benignity, of ingenuity, which being cherished, excited, and quickened by good culture, do, to common experience, thrust out flowers very lovely, yield fruits very pleasant of virtue and goodness. We see that even the generality of men are prone to approve the laws and rules directing to justice, sincerity, and beneficence; to

<sup>k</sup> Τάξις ἐκ λογικοῦ τε καὶ ἀλόγου κράματος, τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ζῶον λογικὸν συνεστήσατο· καὶ συνέδησε μυστικῶς τε καὶ ἀρρήτως τὸν χοῦν τῷ νοί, καὶ τὸν νοῦν τῷ πνεύματι.—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxii. Opp. Tom. i. p. 585 E.]

<sup>l</sup> Ἐν τι τῶν ἀδυνάτων, τὸ ὑπάρχειν αὐτῇ κίνησιν.—de An. i. 3. ἀπαθής.—I. 5; III. 4. 5, &c. ἀμυγής, ἀπλοῦς.—iii. 4. 5, &c.

commend actions suitable unto them, to honour persons practising according to them; as also to distaste, detest, or despise such men, whose principles or tempers incline them to the practice of injury, fraud, malice, and cruelty<sup>m</sup>; yea, even them men generally are apt to dislike, who are so addicted to themselves as to be backward to do good to others. Yea no man can act according to those rules of justice and goodness without satisfaction of mind; no man can do against them without inward self-condemnation and regret, (as St Paul did observe for us.) No man hardly is so savage, in whom the receiving kindnesses doth not beget a kindly sense, and an inclination (*eo nomine*, for that cause barely) to return the like; which inclination cannot well be ascribed to any other principle than somewhat of ingenuity innate to man<sup>n</sup>.

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Rom. ii.  
15.

All men, I suppose, feel in themselves (if at least not hardened by villanous custom) a disposition prompting them to commiserate, yea, (even with some trouble and some damage to themselves) to succour and relieve them who are in want, pain, or any distress; even mere strangers, and such from whom they can expect no return or benefit or advantage to themselves.

<sup>m</sup> Quæ autem natio non comitatem, non benignitatem, non gratum animum, et beneficii memorem diligit? quæ superbos, quæ maleficos, quæ crudeles, quæ ingratos non aspernatur, non odit?—Cic. de Leg. i. [11, 32.]

<sup>n</sup> Quid tam laudabile, quid tam æqualiter in omnium animos receptum, quam referre bene meritis gratiam.—Sen. de Benef. iv. 16. [3.]

Huic uni rei non posuimus legem, tanquam satis natura cavisset.—Ibid. iv. 17. [1.]



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Many examples occur, in experience and in History, of men, who, from dictates of common reason and natural inclinations, (which in this case are not to be separated, both arising from the same source of human nature,) have been very apt freely and liberally to impart unto others somewhat of any good thing they possessed; to sacrifice their own ease, pleasure, profit unto others' benefit; to undergo great pains and hazards for public good, (the good of their family, of their friends, of their country, of mankind in general)<sup>o</sup>; and all this without any hope of recompense; except perhaps that commonly they might have some regard to the approbation and acceptance, to the goodwill and gratitude of them, whom their beneficence obliged; which in real esteem is no great derogation to their noble performances; and argues only, there is, together with such a laudable benignity or goodness of nature, (to excite and enliven it,) implanted a natural ambition also, or generosity in man's soul; which being well moderated seems not culpable; since God himself, in return to his most free beneficence, doth expect and require somewhat of thanks and praise; so much as we are able to render to him.

Yea, (although our adversaries will scarce admit so much, for that not supposing any good original, they are unwilling to allow any good derivative; they are as ready to exclude all humanity as divinity; they have commonly, as no opinion of God, so no good opinion of men; feeling little good in themselves, they are willing to think less to be in others; so projecting to excuse them-

<sup>o</sup> Vicit amor patriæ, laudumque cupido.

selves, and shroud their own particular faults under the covert of a general naughtiness,) I doubt not to say, there have been many persons in all ages full of very single and sincere good-will toward men, heartily desiring the public good, and compassionating the evils of mankind<sup>p</sup>; ready with their best endeavours to procure and promote the one, to prevent and remove the other, from principles of mere ingenuity or pure nobleness; that with unmoveable resolution have persisted in courses tending to such ends, although in them they have encountered dangers, disgraces, and troubles from the ingrateful world, or rather from some men prevalent therein, their envy or spite.

In fine, the wisest observers of man's nature have pronounced him to be a creature gentle and sociable<sup>q</sup>, inclinable to and fit for conversation, apt to keep good order, to observe rules of justice, to embrace any sort of virtue, if well managed, if instructed by good discipline, if guided by good example, if living under the influence of wise laws and virtuous governors. Fierceness, rudeness, craft, malice, all perverse and intractable, all mischievous and vicious dispositions do grow among men (like weeds in any, even the best soil) and

<sup>p</sup> Nec est quisquam gentis ullius, qui ducem naturam nactus ad virtutem pervenire non possit.—Cic. de Leg. i. [10, 31.]

Natura enim nos ad mentem optimam genuit: adeoque discere meliora volentibus promptum est, ut vere intuenti mirum sit illud magis, malos esse tam multos.—Quintil. xii. 11. [12.]

<sup>q</sup> Ζῶον ἡμερον. [Ἀνθρώπος δέ, ὥς φαμεν, ἡμερον, ὅμως μὴν παιδείας μὲν ὀρθῆς τυχὸν καὶ φύσεως εὐτυχούς θεϊότατον ἡμερώτατόν τε ζῶον γίνεσθαι φιλεῖ, &c.—Plat. de Leg. vi. 766 A.]

Ζῶον πολιτικόν. [Ἀνθρώπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῶον.—Arist. Polit. i. 2.]

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overspread the earth, from neglect of good education; from ill conduct, ill custom, ill example; (it is the comparison of St Chrysostom and of Plutarch<sup>1</sup>.) It is favour therefore, I conceive, to their own habitual depravations of nature (or perhaps to some prejudicate opinions) which hath induced some men to make so disadvantageous a portraiture of human nature, in which nothing lightsome or handsome, no lines of candour or rectitude do appear, but all seems black and crooked; all is drawn over with dusky shades, and irregular features of base designfulness and malicious cunning; of suspicion, malignity, rapacity; which character were it true, (in that general extent, and not proper only to some monsters among men,) we need not further seek for hell, since as many men, so many fiends appear unto us. But so commodious living here; so many offices daily performed among men, of courtesy, mercy, and pity; so many constant observances of friendship and amity; so many instances of fidelity and gratitude; so much credit always (even among pagans and barbarians) preserved to justice and humanity, (humanity, that very name doth fairly argue for us,) do sufficiently confute those defamers and slanderers of mankind; do competently evidence, that all good inclinations

<sup>1</sup> Καθόπερ γὰρ ἡ γῆ, όταν λιπαρὰ καὶ πίων οὖσα τυγχάνῃ, μὴ γεωργήται δέ, πολλὴν ἐπιδείκνυται τῶν ἀκανθῶν τὴν φορὰν, οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἡ φύσις ἡ ἡμετέρα, καλὴ οὖσα διὰ τὸν παραγαγόντα, καὶ πρὸς τὸν τῆς ἀρετῆς καρπὸν ἐπιτηδείως ἔχουσα, &c.—Chrys. Orat. LXXIX. [Opp. Tom. v. p. 613.]

Ἄτε γὰρ εἰδὼς, ὅσῃν μοῖραν ἀρετῆς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ φερόμεναι πρὸς γένεσιν αἱ ψυχὰι βαδίζουσι, καὶ τὸ γενναῖον ὡς ἰσχυρὸν αὐταῖς καὶ οὐκ ἐξίτηλον ἐπέφυκεν, ἐξωθεῖ δὲ παρὰ φύσιν τὴν κακίαν ὑπὸ τροφῆς, καὶ ὁμιλίας φαύλης φθειρόμενον, &c.—Plut. de sera Num. Vind. [Opp. Tom. viii. p. 179. Ed. Reisk.]

are not quite banished the world, nor quite razed out of man's soul; but that even herein human nature doth somewhat resemble its excellent original, the nature Divine. SERM.  
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Thus doth man's nature in its substance, as it were, its faculties, its manner of operation, resemble God: but we may further observe, that as children are, indeed, in complexion and feature usually born somewhat like to their parents, but grow daily more like unto them, (those smaller lineaments continually with their bulk and stature increasing and becoming more discernible;) so is man improvable to more exact resemblance of God: his soul hath appetites and capacities, by which well guided and ordered it soars and climbs continually in its affection and desire toward Divine perfection. Man hath an insatiable curiosity and greediness of knowledge, (his eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor his ear filled with hearing;) he never rests content with, but in a manner despises the notions already acquired; always striving to enlarge and enrich his mind with intellectual treasure: so doth he tend nearer to Divine omniscience. Eccles. i.  
8.

And as his searches after truth, so his desires of good are in a manner boundless. No present, no definite good can long detain his liking, or fully content him: he soon doth suck it dry, and leaves it insipid; then longs and hunts after fresh entertainments: he seems poor to himself in the greatest plenty, and straitened in the most ample condition. In short, he ever aspires to somewhat more great and high than what he enjoys; finding in himself a kind of infinite (at least indefinite) ambition and

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Being sensible of his own mortal and transitory condition, he yet seeks to live for ever in his name and memory, labours to perform memorable actions, rears lasting monuments of his art and knowledge, of his wealth and power, of his bounty and munificence, by all means studying and striving to commend himself to the regard of posterity: thus affects he another sort of likeness unto God, even a kind of immortality and eternity.

If also, being through Divine grace awakened out of that drowsy state, (which naturally in great measure hath seized upon all men,) he discovereth his moral or spiritual wants and imperfections; he is then apt to breathe and endeavour a nearer similitude to God, even in goodness, righteousness, and purity; to labour in getting continually his inclinations more rectified, and his passions better composed; in restraining, subduing, destroying inordinate self-love, with the sensuality, the perverseness, the pride, the malice growing from that evil root; in promoting all virtuous desires and affections, especially reverence toward God his father, and charity toward man his brother; neither then can he be at ease or well content, till he arrive in such dispositions of mind to that nearness of perfection which his capacities do admit. And a man thus qualified in degree, thus tending in desire toward higher perfection in goodness, is indeed the most lively image that can be framed of God; *Being*, as St Paul expresseth it, *renewed*

to an acknowledgment *εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν*, (or better understanding of himself, of his Maker, of true goodness) according to the image of him that made him. I might also propound to your consideration that *φίλτρον φυσικόν τὸ πρὸς τὸν Κτίσαντα*, (as one of our Fathers<sup>a</sup> doth call it,) that natural proclivity observable in man to acknowledge and worship God; to embrace Religion both in opinion and practice, and especially on all occasions of need or distress to have recourse unto him, as an argument of his relation to God. It is, we see, common in nature for all creatures to be readily acquainted with their parents, to run after them, to expect from them supply of wants, succour in straits, refuge and defence in dangers; from hence we may easily discern to what parent any child belongs: and since there appears the like instinct and capacity innate to man, (and, indeed, to him alone,) whence some philosophers thought good from this property to define man, *A creature capable of Religion*<sup>t</sup>; since he is apt to entertain notions of God, to bear in his mind awe and respect toward him; since he is ready in all his straits (when other helps and hopes fail him) to lift up his heart and voice toward heaven for assistance; why may we not in like manner hence discern, and with like reason infer, that man is also in especial manner God's child and offspring?

I might also adjoin, that the very power of

<sup>a</sup> Orig. in Cels.—[Lib. III. p. 135.]

Testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ.—Tertull. Apol. cap. XVII. [Opp. p. 17 A.]

<sup>t</sup> Animal religionis capax.

Animus—hoc habet argumentum divinitatis suæ, quod illum divina delectant.—Sen. Nat. Quæst. Lib. I. Præf. [§ 10.]

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framing conceptions, although imperfect and inadequate, concerning God, is in itself a faculty so very spiritual and sublime, that it argues something Divine in man's soul. *That like is known by its like*<sup>u</sup>, was an axiom among ancient philosophers; and that *Spiritual things are spiritually discerned*, is the rule of a better master in wisdom than they; and beasts surely, because not endued with reason, have no conceptions concerning man's nature or the matters proper to him, (according to what rules, by what methods, to what purposes he doth act;) so in likelihood should we not be able to apprehend and discourse about things appertaining to God, his nature, the methods and reasons of his proceedings; the notions of eternal truth, the indispensable laws of right, the natural differences of good and evil, with such like high objects of thought, except our souls had in them some sparks of Divine understanding; some cognition with, and communication from Heaven.

I shall to these only subjoin one further consideration worth attending to; that the wisest and most considerate men, in several times, only by reflecting upon their own minds, and observing in them what was most lovely and excellent, most pure and straight, have fallen upon, and conspired in notions concerning God, very suitable to those which we believe, taught us by Revelation; although contrary to the prejudices of their education, and to popular conceits: many admirable passages to

<sup>u</sup> Γινώσκεισθαι καὶ τὸ ὅμοιον τῷ ὁμοίῳ.—Arist. de Anima, i. 2. [15.]

Quis cœlum possit, nisi cœli munere, nosse?

Et reperire Deum, nisi qui pars ipso Deorum est?

Manil. [Astronom. ii. 115.]

this purpose we may find dropped from the mouth of Socrates and the pen of Plato; in Cicero, in Epictetus, yea, in the least credulous or fanciful of men, Aristotle himself. Whence plainly enough we may collect how near affinity there is between God and us; how legible characters of the Divinity are written upon our souls; how easily we may know God, if we be not ignorant of ourselves; that we need not go far to fetch arguments to prove that God is, nor to find lessons to learn what he is; since we always carry both about us, or rather within us; since our souls could, indeed, come from no other than such a Being, whom they so resemble and represent.

I have indulged my thoughts somewhat freely in this speculation, yet I hope not altogether impertinently, for that (as I before alleged) in the chief of God's works (observable by us) we may reasonably suppose, that his glory doth chiefly shine; and will therefore be most discernible to us, if we open our eyes and apply our minds thereto.

II. Thus doth human nature, being in each singular man, shew the existence of God, as its original author and pattern; considering also men as related and combined together in society, some glimpse of a Divine power and wisdom ordering them toward it, and preserving them in it, may be perceived. As in the world natural, the parts thereof are so fitted in varieties of size, of quality, of aptitude to motion, that all may stick together, (excluding chasms and vacuities,) and all co-operate incessantly to the preservation of that common union and harmony which was there intended; so



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in the world political we may observe various propensions and aptitudes disposing men to collection and coherence and co-operation in society. They are apt to flock together, not only from a kind of necessity, discovered by reason, for mutual help and defence; but from a natural love to company and conversation, with an aptness to delight therein, and from an inbred aversion to that solitude, wherein many great appetites natural to man must needs be stifled. They are also marvellously fitted to maintain intercourse not only by the principal guide thereof, reason, but by that great instrument of it, speech; whereby men impart, and, as it were, transfuse into one another, their inmost thoughts; which faculty doth evidently relate unto, and plainly shews men naturally designed for society. In order thereto, men are also endued with several subordinate inclinations and qualifications (arising from different temper of body, or disposition of mind) requisite to cement society, and preserve it for a competent durance in peace and order; some few being made very sagacious and provident, and thence fit to direct; others very quick and active, thence able to execute; others of a high spirit and courage, thence affecting and disposed to command; most others being dull in conceit, or heavy of temper, or of a soft spirit, and thence apt to follow, content to rest in mean state, willing to obey. All these things being so ordered, that even contrarieties of humour in men do serve to settle them in their due place and posture; to beget and preserve a peaceful union, and a decent harmony of action in society; which, supposing all men in ability and inclination more like or equal, (able to

do, apt to affect the same things,) could hardly be; SERM.  
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for then all men would be competitors and strug-  
glers for the same thing, and so none would easily  
obtain or peacefully enjoy it.

Now since it is plainly best for man to live thus  
in society, many great benefits thence accruing to  
him, (security to his life, safe enjoying the fruits of  
his industry, much ease by mutual assistance, much  
delight in conversation; all that civil people enjoy  
of convenience beyond barbarians and savages, or,  
indeed, above beasts,) that men are so disposed and  
suited thereto, is an argument of mighty wisdom  
and great goodness in that cause from whence all  
this proceeded: and such a cause is God.

Thus from the constitution of societies we may  
collect a provident care over human affairs; the  
same also may be reasonably deduced from the  
preservation of them; for although man be in-  
clined unto and fitted for society, yet being an  
agent very free and loose in his action, (acting con-  
tingently, and without necessary subjection to any  
settled law or rule, as do other things in nature,)  
no ordinary banks will constantly retain him in  
due place and order; so that the course of affairs,  
perverted by some men's irregular wills and  
passions, would run into great confusion, did not a  
wise care also continually govern things, season-  
ably interposing its hand, and thereby upholding,  
retaining, establishing them in order, or reducing  
them thereinto; did not a superintendent power  
restrain the fierceness of tyrants, the ambition of  
grandees, the greediness of oppressors, the wild-  
ness and precipitancy of factious multitudes; did  
not God sometime break the arm of the wicked; or

Ps. xxxvii.  
17;  
x. 15.  
Job xii.  
21;  
xxxviii. 15.

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Ps. cvii.  
40;  
lxxv. 7.

Ps. cxlvi.  
7;  
cvii. 41;  
ix. 9;  
x. 14;  
xxxvii. 18.

as Job speaks, pour contempt upon princes, and weaken the strength of the mighty; if he, that stilleth the noise of the seas, did not also repress the tumults of the people. Indeed, as in nature it is wisely provided that tigers, wolves, and foxes upon the earth, that kites in the air, and sharks in the sea, shall not so multiply and abound, but that many tame and gentle creatures shall abide there by them; so among men, that (among divers fierce, ravenous, crafty, and mischievous men) so many poor, simple, and harmless people do make a shift to live here in competent safety, liberty, ease, and comfort, doth argue his especial over-  
watching care and governance, who (as we are, in conformity to experience, taught by sacred Scripture) hath an especial regard unto the poor and unto the meek; providing for them, and protecting them.

I might subjoin those significations of Providence, which the general connexion of mankind doth afford; things being so ordered, that several nations and societies shall be prompted, by need or by advantage mutual, to maintain correspondence and commerce with each other; under common laws and compacts, that so there should become a kind of union and harmony even among the several parts and elements, as it were, of the human world. I might consider the benefit that arises (as in the natural world from contrary qualities and motions, so) in the human world even from wars and contentions; how these rouse men from sloth, brush away divers vices, ferment and purge things into a better condition: but I will not strive to be so minute and subtle.

Here I shall conclude these sorts of argumentation, inferring the existence of God from the common effects obvious to our sense and experience, either in the greater world of nature, or lesser world of man; by which God doth continually, in a still, though very audible voice, whisper this great truth into our ears. There be other sort of effects, more rare and extraordinary, which go above or against both those streams of natural and human things, whereby God doth more loudly, as it were, and expressly proclaim his being and providence; the consideration of which I shall reserve to another time.

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*Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words, which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may through thy grace be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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I Believe in God.

## SERMON VIII.

THE BEING OF GOD PROVED FROM UNIVERSAL  
CONSENT.

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Ps. XIX. 3, 4.

*There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard: their line (or rather, according to the LXX<sup>a</sup>, their voice) is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*

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THE Psalmist doth in this place observe and affirm (very plainly) the universality of Religion; that all nations did conspire in acknowledging a Divinity, and ascribing thereto the framing and conversation of the heavens. He supposes the heavens to speak an universal language, heard and understood by all people, therein glorifying God and declaring him their Maker.

Upon which supposition I purpose now to ground an argument, to prove (that which formerly by several other kinds of discourse I have endeavoured to evince) that great fundamental truth concerning the existence of God, that is, of one incomprehensibly excellent Being, the Maker and Governor of all things.

<sup>a</sup> Who read קולם instead of קים.

The argument (to be short) is that, as Lactantius<sup>b</sup> speaks, *Universal and unanimous testimony of people and nations*, through all courses of time, *who* (otherwise differing in language, custom, and conceit) *only have agreed in this one matter of opinion*. This testimony, in itself simply taken, hath indeed, according to the rules of reason and judgments of wise men, no small force; but seems to have much greater, if we consider the source, whatever that could be, whence it was derived. As to the thing absolutely taken, Aristotle thus ranks the degrees of probability: what seems true to some wise men is somewhat probable; what seems to the most or to all wise men, is very probable; what most men, both wise and unwise, assent unto, doth still more resemble truth; but what men generally consent in hath the highest probability, and approaches near to demonstrable truth; so near, that it may pass for ridiculous arrogance and self-conceitedness, or for intolerable obstinacy and perverseness, to deny it. *A man*, saith the Philosopher<sup>c</sup>, *may assume what seems true to the wise, if it do not contradict the common opinion of men*; no man's wisdom (he supposes) sufficient to balance the general authority of men. Indeed, when extravagant wits, and pretenders to wisdom, (or to an extraordinary reach in knowledge,) shall assert things evidently repugnant to sense or reason; that snow and coal have the like appearance, (as did Anaxagoras;) that all motion is impossible, (as

<sup>b</sup> Testimonium populorum atque gentium in una hac re non dissidentium.—Lact. Inst. 1. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Θείη γὰρ ἂν τις τὸ δοκοῦν τοῖς σοφοῖς, εἰ μὴ ἐναντίον ταῖς τῶν πολλῶν δόξαις ᾖ.—Arist. Top. 1. [10.]

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Zeno;) that contradictory propositions may be consistent, (as Heraclitus;) we may add to those instances, that all things in nature proceeded from chance, (as Epicurus and his followers;) what other means have we (since no principles can be more evident than such propositions as they reject) to confute them, or to decide the cause, than making appeal to the common sentiments of mankind? which if they decline, what have we more to do than to laugh at or pity them? However, surely, he needs to have a very strong and very clear reason to shew, who dares to withstand the common suffrage of mankind, and to challenge all the world of mistake. Now somewhat to enforce this discourse; but more to evidence the matter of fact upon which it is grounded, and withal to make good that confirmation thereof, which was intimated; I shall allege some few testimonies of ancient philosophers, (that is, of witnesses in this cause most impartial and unsuspected,) selected out of innumerable others extant and obvious, serving to the same purpose: *We are wont to attribute much, saith Seneca, to what all men presume; it is an argument with us of truth, that anything seems true to all; as that there be Gods we hence collect, for that all men have engrafted in them an opinion concerning Gods; neither is there any nation so void of laws, or good manners, that it doth not believe there are some Gods<sup>d</sup>: so doth he assert the*

<sup>d</sup> Multum dare solemus præsumptioni omnium hominum. Apud nos veritatis argumentum est, aliquid omnibus videri; tanquam Deos esse, inter alia sic colligimus, quod omnibus de Diis opinio insita est; nec ulla gens usquam est adeo extra leges moresque projecta, ut non aliquos Deos credat.—Sen. Epist. cxvii. [5.] Vid. de Benef. iv. 4.

matter of fact, and argue from it. The like doth Cicero in many places, sometimes in the person of his dialogists, sometimes according to his own sense; pressing this argument as very weighty. *This, saith he in his Tusculan Questions, seems a most firm thing, which is alleged, why we should believe Gods to be, because no nation is so fierce, no man so wild, whose mind an opinion concerning Gods hath not imbued: many think amiss concerning Gods, for that uses to proceed from bad custom, but all do however conceive a Divine power and nature to exist—Now in all things the consent of all nations is to be supposed a law of nature<sup>o</sup>. We shall have other occasion to cite divers places out of Plato and Aristotle, confirming the same thing; I shall now only add these pregnant words of Maximus Tyrius: In such a quarrelling, and tumult, and jangling; (about other matters of opinion,) you may see this one by common accord acknowledged law and speech, that there is one God, the King and Father of all; and many gods, the children of God, and ruling together with him: this the Greek says, and this the Barbarian says; the inhabiters of the*

\* Firmissimum hoc afferri videtur, cur Deos esse credamus, quod nulla gens tam fera, nemo omnium tam sit immanis, cujus mentem non imbuerit Deorum opinio. Multi de Diis prava sentiunt, (id enim vitioso more effici solet;) omnes tamen esse vim, et naturam divinam arbitrantur.—Omni autem in re consensio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est.—Tusc. I. [13, 30.] Vid. de Nat. Deor. I. [17, 44. Cum enim non instituto aliquo, aut more, aut lege sit opinio constituta, maneatque ad unum omnium firma consensio: intelligi necesse est, esse Deos, quoniam insitas eorum, vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus. De quo autem omnium natura consensit, id verum esse necesse est.] et II. [4. 12. Itaque inter omnes omnium gentium sententia constat; omnibus enim innatum est, et in animo quasi insculptum, esse Deos.]



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*continent, and the islander; the wise and the unwise do say the same<sup>f</sup>.*

Thus it appears, by testimony abundantly sufficient, (to which also all histories ancient and modern do agree,) that our conclusion hath been the catholic and current doctrine of all times and of all places; so that who denies assent thereto, is beyond measure paradoxical, and belongs to a sect very thin and weak; is in opinion what a monster is in nature, a thing extraordinary and uncouth; as a lion without courage, an ox without horns, a bird without wings, (as the Philosopher<sup>g</sup> speaks;) a thing which seldom haps to be, and that never without some great error or defect.

But if, as surely he will, our haughty adversary shall refuse the verdict of this grand jury, we may assert its authority, not only as competent in itself, but as more considerable in respect to the causes whence it proceeded, or from the manner by which this general consent can be conceived to have been produced and propagated among men. That men should thus conspire in opinion must needs proceed either, 1 from hence, that such an opinion was by way of natural light or instinct (as the first most

<sup>f</sup> Ἐν τοσούτῳ δὴ πολέμῳ καὶ στάσει καὶ διαφωνίᾳ, ἕνα ἴδοις ἂν ἐν πάσῃ γῇ ὁμόφωνον νόμον καὶ λόγον, ὅτι Θεὸς εἰς πάντων βασιλεὺς καὶ πατὴρ· καὶ θεοὶ πολλοὶ, Θεοῦ παῖδες, συνάρχοντες Θεῷ. ταῦτα δὲ ὁ Ἕλλην λέγει, καὶ ὁ Βάρβαρος λέγει, καὶ ὁ ἡπειρώτης, καὶ ὁ θαλάττιος, καὶ ὁ σοφὸς, καὶ ὁ ἄσοφος.—Diss. I. [XVII. p. 193. Ed. Davis.]

<sup>g</sup> Εἰ δὲ ἐξεγένοντο ἐν τῷ ξύμπαντι αἰῶνι δύο πού καὶ τρεῖς, ἄθεον καὶ ταπεινὸν καὶ ἀναισθὲς γένος—ὡς ἄθυμος λέων, ὡς βοῦς ἄκερος, ὡς ὄρνις ἄπτερος.—Id. [ibid. p. 195.]

Καὶ τίς οὐκ ἂν ἐπήνεσε τὴν τῶν βαρβάρων σοφίαν; εἶγε μηδεὶς αὐτῶν εἰς ἀθεότητα ἐξέπεσε, μηδὲ ἀμφιβάλλουσι περὶ θεῶν, ἅρά γε εἰσὶν, ἢ οὐκ εἰσὶν καὶ ἅρά γε ἡμῶν φροντίζουσιν, ἢ οὐ. &c.—Ælian. Var. Hist. II. 31. [Tom. I. p. 146.]

evident principles of science are conceived to be, or as the most effectual propensions toward good are) implanted in man's nature; thus Cicero and other philosophers suppose it to have come: in him it is thus said, and argued: *Since not by any institution, or custom, or law, this opinion is established, and among all, without exception, a firm consent doth abide, it is necessary there should be Gods; we having implanted, or rather inbred, notions concerning them; but about whatever men naturally do agree, that must needs be true: we must therefore confess there are Gods<sup>h</sup>.* Thus doth he draw this opinion from original light of nature. Or, 2, it may come from a common inclination in man's soul naturally disposing every man to entertain this opinion, whenever it is propounded, as there is in our eyes a natural readiness to perceive the light, whenever it shines before us; thus others explain the rise thereof, as Julian particularly; *We all, saith he, without being taught, (without any painful or long instruction,) are persuaded, that a Divinity exists; and to regard it, and to have, we may suppose, a speedy tendency (or recourse) thereto; being in such manner disposed thereto in our souls, as things endued with the faculty of seeing are to the light<sup>i</sup>:* the same similitude is, as I remember, used

<sup>h</sup> Cum enim non instituto aliquo, aut more, aut lege sit opinio constituta, maneatque ad unum omnium firma consensio, intelligi necesse est esse Deos, quoniam insitas eorum, vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus. De quo autem omnium natura consentit, id verum esse necesse est. Esse igitur Deos confitendum est.—De Nat. Deor. I. [17, 44.] Vid. II. [4, 12.]

<sup>i</sup> Πάντες ἀδιδάκτως εἶναι θεῖόν τι πεπείσμεθα, καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο ἀφορᾶν, ἐπ' αὐτὸ τε, οἶμαι, σπεύδειν οὕτω διατιθέμενοι τὰς ψυχὰς πρὸς αὐτό, ὥσπερ οἶμαι πρὸς τὸ φῶς τὰ βλέποντα.—Jul. ad Heraclium [Or. VII. Opp. p. 391.]

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Rom. i.  
19, 20.

by Plato to the same purpose. Or, 3, it may come hence, that some very prevalent reason (obvious to all men, even to the most rude and barbarous, and flowing from common principles or notions of truth) did beget this agreement in them: thus Plutarch derives it from men's common observation of the stars' constant order and motion<sup>k</sup>; so St Paul also seems to imply the knowledge of God manifest to all men from the creation of the world, and the works of God visible therein; and here (in this 19th Psalm) the Prophet may seem to intend the same, although it be not certain he does; for that general acknowledgment and glorifying of God as Maker of the heavens, which he avouches, may be understood as well the consequence as the cause of this religious opinion. Or, 4, it might from some common fountain of instruction (from one ancient master, or one primitive tradition) be conveyed, as from one common head or source, into many particular conduits. Thus the author of the book *de Mundo* (dedicated to Alexander) seems to deduce it: *It is an ancient saying*, says he, *and running in the race of all men, that from God all things, and by God all things were constituted, and do consist*<sup>l</sup>. The like Aristotle<sup>m</sup> himself implies in a notable place, which we shall afterward have occasion to produce.

No other way beside one of these can we

<sup>k</sup> Plut. de Plac. l. 6. [Ἐλάβομεν δ' ἐκ τούτου ἔννοιαν Θεοῦ· αἰεὶ γὰρ ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν ἀστρῶν, τὴν ὑπόγειον φορὰν ἐνεχθέντα, ὁμοία μὲν ἀνατέλλει τοῖς χρώμασιν, ἴσα δὲ τοῖς μεγέθεσι, καὶ κατὰ τόπους καὶ κατὰ χρόνους τοὺς αὐτοὺς.—Opp. Tom. ix. p. 487. ed. Reisk.]

<sup>l</sup> Ἀρχαῖος μὲν οὖν τις λόγος, καὶ πατριός ἐστι πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, εἰς ἐκ Θεοῦ τὰ πάντα, καὶ διὰ Θεοῦ ἡμῖν συνέστηκεν.—Cap. vi.

<sup>m</sup> Metaph. xi. 8.

(following experience or reason) imagine, by which any opinion or practice should prevail generally among men, who otherwise are so apt to differ and dissent in judgment about things. And be it any one or more of these ways that this opinion became so universally instilled into men's minds, our argument will thereby gain weight and force: if we assign or acknowledge any of the two first ways, we do in effect yield the question; and grant it unreasonable to deny our conclusion: if nature forcibly drives men, or strongly draws men into this persuasion, (nature, which always we find in her notions and in her instincts very sincere and faithful, not only to ourselves, but to all other creatures,) how vain an extravagancy will it then be to oppose it? Also, if we grant that plain reason, apparent to the generality of men, hath moved them to consent herein, do we not therefore, by dissenting from it, renounce common sense, and confess ourselves unreasonable? But if we say, that it did arise in the last manner, from a common instruction or primitive tradition, (as indeed, to my seeming, from that chiefly, assisted by good reason, it most probably did arise,) we shall thereby be driven to inquire, who that common master, or the author of such tradition was; of any such we find no name recorded, (as we do of them, who have by plausible reasons or artifices drawn whole nations and sects of people to a belief of their doctrine;) we find no time when, no place where, no manner how it began to grow or spread, as in other cases hath been wont to appear; what then can we otherwise reasonably deem, than that the first deliverers and teachers thereof were none other, than

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the first parents of mankind itself, who, as they could not be ignorant of their own original, so could not but take care by ordinary education to convey the knowledge thereof to their children; whence it must needs insensibly spread itself over all posterities of men, being sucked in with their milk, being taught them together with their first rudiments of speech? Thus doth that consideration lead us to another, very advantageous to our purpose; that mankind hath proceeded from one common stock of one man or a few men gathered together; which doth upon a double score confirm our assertion: first, as proving the generations of men had a beginning; secondly, as affording us their most weighty authority for the doctrine we assert. For, 1, supposing mankind had a beginning upon this earth, whence could it proceed but from such a Being as we assert? who but such an one (so wise, powerful, and good) could or would form these bodies of ours so full of wonderful artifice? who should infuse those Divine endowments (not only of life and sense, but) of understanding and reason? Aristotle, discoursing about the generation of animals, says, *If man* (or any other perfect animal) *were γηγενής, he must be necessarily produced, either as out of a worm, or as from an egg*<sup>n</sup>; but is it not ridiculous to suppose him to arise in either of those manners<sup>o</sup>? Did we, did ever any one

<sup>n</sup> Arist. de Gener. Anim. III. 11. [Διὸ καὶ περὶ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τετραπόδων γενέσεως ὑπολάβοι τις ἂν, εἴπερ ἐγγίγοντό ποτε γηγενεῖς, ὥσπερ φασὶ τινες, δύο τρόπων γίνεσθαι τὸν ἕτερον· ἢ γὰρ ὡς σκώληκος συνισταμένον τὸ πρῶτον, ἢ ἐξ ᾠόν.]

<sup>o</sup> Stoici putant homines in omnibus terris et agris generatos tanquam fungos.—Lact. Instit. VII. 4.

Vid. Lips. Phys. Stoic. III. [4.]

in any age observe any such production of a man? Yet, why if once it could be, should it not happen some time, yea often again, in some part of the earth, in so many thousand years? what peculiar lucky temper of slime can we imagine to have been then, which not at sometime afterward, not somewhere, should appear again? Experience sufficiently declares, that more is required to so noble a production, that men no otherwise come into the world, than either from another man, (fitted in a manner curious above our conception with many organs most exquisitely suited to that purpose,) or immediately from a cause incomprehensibly great and wise. And could we without fondness conceive man's body possibly might arise (like mice, as Diodorus Siculus tells us, out of the mud of Nilus) from earth and water fermented together, and organized by the sun's heat; yet (as more largely we have discoursed at another time) we cannot however well suppose his soul, that principle of operations so excellent, (so much different from, so far elevated above all material motions,) to spring up from dirty stuff, however baked or boiled by heat. I ask also, (supposing still this notion derived from the first men,) 2, who instilled even this notion into them? why they should conceive themselves to come from God, if they did not find it so; if he that made them did not sensibly discover himself to them, and shew them, that to him they owed their being? In short, if they did testify and teach their posterity, that they came from God, we can have no reason to disbelieve them; nor can imagine more credible witnesses, or more reasonable instructors than themselves concerning their

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own original: it is a discourse, this, which we find even in Plato: *We must, saith he, yield credence to them, who first avouched themselves the offspring of God, and did sure clearly know their own progenitors; it is indeed impossible to distrust the children of the Gods, although otherwise speaking without plausible or necessary demonstrations; but, following law, we must believe them, as testifying about matters peculiarly belonging to themselves*<sup>p</sup>.

Thus do these two notions, that of general tradition concerning God, and that concerning man's origin upon earth from one stock, mutually support and defend each other<sup>q</sup>. And indeed, concerning the latter, there be divers other arguments of the same kind, although perhaps hardly any so clear and valid, confirming it; I mean divers common opinions, stories, and practices of an unaccountable rise, which cannot be well deemed to have been introduced, and so universally diffused among men, otherwise than from this fountain. I think it worth the while to propound some instances thereof, of each kind.

Even this opinion, or story itself, concerning mankind proceeding from one single or very narrow stock, was commonly received, and that from this head of tradition; as also divers other concerning the nature and state of man.

<sup>p</sup> Πιστέον δὲ τοῖς εἰρηκόσιν ἔμπροσθεν, ἐγγόνους μὲν θεῶν οὖσαν, ὡς ἔφασαν, σαφῶς δὲ πού τοις γε αὐτῶν προγόνους εἰδῶσαν ἀδύνατον οὖν θεῶν παισὶν ἀπιστεῖν, καίπερ ἄνευ τε εἰκότων καὶ ἀναγκαίων ἀποδείξεων λέγουσιν, ἀλλ' ὡς οἰκεία φάσκουσιν ἀπαγγέλλειν ἐπομένους τῇ νόμῳ πιστευτέον.—Tim. [40 D.]

<sup>q</sup> Quæ si singula vos forte non movent, universa certe tamen inter se connexa, atque conjuncta movere debebunt.—Cic. de Nat. Deor. II. [65, 163.]

That God did form man and breathe his soul into him, (as Aratus says, that *We are God's offspring*<sup>r</sup>, and, as Cicero speaks, that *We have our souls drawn and dropped from the Divine nature*<sup>s</sup>;) might be shewn by innumerable testimonies to have been a general opinion<sup>t</sup>; which although it have a very strong foundation in reason, yet it seems rather to have obtained by virtue of tradition.

That man was formed after the image of God, and doth much resemble him, was also a general opinion, as Aristotle<sup>u</sup> himself observes; and Ovid<sup>x</sup> most expressly, according to what he found set down in ancient stories.

That man's soul is immortal, and destined to a future state of life, in joy or pain respectively, according to his merits or demerits in this life; that there should accordingly pass severe scrutinies and judgments after death upon the actions of this life<sup>y</sup>; that there were places provided of rest and pleasure for good men, of horror and misery for bad men departed; were opinions that did commonly possess men's minds; none of them, it seems, upon the force of any arguments having a common influence upon men's minds, (such as philosophers did by speculation invent, being

<sup>r</sup> Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν.—Acts xvii. 28.

<sup>s</sup> Divinitas, unde omnes animos haustos, aut acceptos, aut libatos habebimus.—Cic. de Divin. [ii. 11. 26.]

<sup>t</sup> Vid. Clem. Alex. Str. v. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 709.]

<sup>u</sup> Ἀνθρωποειδὲς γὰρ τοὺς (θεούς), &c.—Metaph. xi. 8.

<sup>y</sup> Ὡς περ δὲ καὶ τὰ εἶδη ταυτοῖς ἀφομοιοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὕτω καὶ τοὺς βίους τῶν θεῶν.—Polit. i. 2.

<sup>x</sup> Finxit in effigiem moderantium cuncta deorum —

[Met. i. 83.]

<sup>y</sup> Vid. Clem. Str. v. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 721.]



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indeed too subtle for vulgar capacities to apprehend, and scarce able to persuade themselves,) but rather from their education, continued through all times, and commencing from that head we speak of; as even such philosophers themselves confess: *We must*, says Plato, *believe the reports of this kind*, (speaking about these matters,) *being so many, and so very ancient*<sup>a</sup>: and, *We suppose*, saith Cicero, *that souls abide after death from the consent of all nations*<sup>a</sup>: and, *I cannot*, saith he again, *assent unto those, who have lately begun to discourse, that souls do perish together with bodies, and that all things are blotted out by death: the authority of the ancients doth more prevail with me*<sup>b</sup>: and, *When*, saith Seneca, *we dispute concerning the eternity of souls, the consent of men either fearing or worshipping the Inferi* (that is, the state of things after death) *hath no slight moment with us*<sup>c</sup>. Even Celsus himself (an Epicurean philosopher, and great enemy of our faith) confesses, that *Divine men had delivered it, that happy souls should enjoy a happy life hereafter*<sup>d</sup>.

The opinion concerning man having sometimes

<sup>a</sup> Πιστεύειν δὲ ταῖς ἄλλαις φήμαις χρεὼν περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, οὕτω πολλαῖς καὶ σφόδρα παλαιαῖς ὁδοῖς.—Plat. de Leg. [xi. 927 A.] Vid. Gorg. sub fin.

<sup>a</sup> Permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium.—Cic. Tusc. i. [16. 36.]

<sup>b</sup> Neque enim assentior iis, qui hæc nuper disserere cœperunt cum corporibus simul animos interire, atque omnia morte deleri. Plus apud me antiquorum auctoritas valet, &c.—Cic. Læl. [cap. iv.]

<sup>c</sup> Quum de animarum æternitate disserimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum, aut timentium inferos, aut colentium.—Sen. Ep. cxvii. [5.]

<sup>d</sup> Ἰστέόρηται θεοῖς ἀνδράσι παλαιαῖς εὐδαίμων βίος ψυχαῖς εὐδαίμοσι.—Celsus apud Orig. [Lib. vii.] p. 350.

been in a better state, (both in regard to complexion of mind, and outward accommodations of life,) but that he did by his wilful miscarriages fall thence into this wretched condition of proneness to sin, and subjection to sorrow, was an ancient doctrine, (if we take Plato's<sup>e</sup> word;) and concerning it Cicero hath these remarkable words: *From which errors and miseries of human life we may, saith he, conclude, that sometime those ancient Prophets, or interpreters of the Divine mind in the delivery of holy mysteries, who have said, that we are born to undergo punishments for the faults committed in a former life, may seem to have understood somewhat<sup>f</sup>.* (It is true, these authors assign this fall to the souls of singular persons in a state of pre-existence; but it is plain enough, how easy it might be so to mistake and transform the story). To the same head may be referred that current story concerning the golden age, in which men first did live so happily without care and pain<sup>g</sup>; which so livelily expresses man's condition in Paradise. As also thereto may belong that relation concerning man's being thrown into this miserable state, because of a rapine committed against God's will, and that by the means of a woman sent

<sup>e</sup> Phæd. [70 c. Παλαιὸς μὲν οὖν ἔστι τις λόγος οὗτος, ὃς μεμνημένα, ὥς εἰσιν ἐνθόδε ἀφικόμενα ἐκεῖ, καὶ πάλιν γε δεῦρο ἀφικνούνται καὶ γίγνονται ἐκ τῶν τεθνεώτων.]

<sup>f</sup> Ex quibus humanæ vitæ erroribus et ærumnis fit, ut interdum veteres illi sive vates, sive in sacris, initiisque tradendis divinæ mentis interpretes, qui nos ob aliqua scelera suscepta in vita superiore pœnarum luendarum causa natos esse dixerunt, aliquid vidisse videantur, &c.—Cic. Fragm. p. 79. [p. 60. Ed. Ernest. 1776.]

<sup>g</sup> Primi mortalium, quique ex his geniti, naturam incorrupti æquebantur, &c.—Sen. Ep. xc. [3.]

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down; who with her hands opened the lid of a great vessel, (fraught with mischiefs,) and thence dispersed sad disasters and sorrows among men; as Hesiod<sup>h</sup> expresseth it, in words very applicable to the fact of our mother Eve, and the event following it.

I do not know also whether what Plato<sup>i</sup> says concerning man's being at first *ἀνδρόγυνος*, (of both sexes,) and being afterward cleaved into two, was borrowed from tradition, or devised from his own fancy; it surely well comports with the sacred history concerning woman being taken out of man. That there are two prime causes, or principles, one of good things, the other of bad, was the ancient doctrine among all the ancient nations; of the Persians, (who called one of them Oromasdes, the other Arimanius;) of the Egyptians, (who had their Osiris and Typhon;) of the Chaldeans, (who had their good and bad planets;) of the Greeks, (who had their good and bad *dæmon*, their *Ζεὺς* and *Ἄδης*;) we have reported by Plutarch in his tract *De Iside et Osiride*<sup>k</sup>, by Laertius in his *Proceme*<sup>l</sup>, and others<sup>m</sup>; which conceits seem derived

<sup>h</sup> χεῖρесси πίθου μέγα πῶμ' ἀφελούσα  
'Ἐσκέδασ' ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἐμήσατο κήδεα λυγρά.

Hes. Op. et Dies [94.]

<sup>i</sup> [Ἡ γὰρ πάλαι ἡμῶν φύσις οὐχ αὕτη ἦν ἡπερ νῦν, ἀλλ' ἄλλοια. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τρία ἦν τὰ γένη τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οὐχ ὥσπερ νῦν δύο, ἄρρεν καὶ θῆλυ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τρίτον προσῆν κοινὸν ἐν ἀμφοτέρων τούτων, οὗ νῦν ὄνομα λοιπὸν, αὐτὸ δὲ ἡφάνισται. ἀνδρόγυνον γὰρ ἐν πότε μὲν ἦν καὶ εἶδος καὶ ὄνομα ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων κοινὸν τοῦ τε ἄρρενος καὶ θήλεος, νῦν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλλ' ἢ ἐν ὀνείδει ὄνομα κείμενον.—Sympt. 189 E.]

<sup>k</sup> [Opp. Tom. vii. p. 456—60. ed. Reisk.]

<sup>l</sup> [Ἀριστοτέλης δ' ἐν πρώτῳ περὶ φιλοσοφίας καὶ πρεσβυτέρους (τοὺς Μάγους) εἶναι τῶν Αἰγυπτίων καὶ δύο κατ' αὐτοὺς εἶναι ἀρχάς, ἀγαθὸν δαίμονα καὶ κακὸν δαίμονα· καὶ τῷ μὲν ὄνομα εἶναι Ζεὺς καὶ Ὀρομάσδης, τῷ δὲ Ἄδης καὶ Ἀρειμάνιος.—]

<sup>m</sup> Aug. de Civ. Dei v. 21. [A quibus (Persis) solos duos deos

from the ancient traditions concerning God the author of all good, and Sathan the tempter to all evil, and the minister of Divine vengeance; (Plutarch expressly says the good principle was called *God*, the bad one, *Dæmon*<sup>a</sup>). Indeed, there were many other relations concerning matters of fact, or pieces of ancient story, agreeing with the sacred writings, which did among the ancient people pass commonly, although somewhat disguised by alterations incident from time and other causes, which seem best derivable from this common fountain: such as that concerning the sons of God, and heroes dwelling on the earth; concerning men of old time exceeding those of following times in length of life, in stature, in strength of body, whereof in ancient poets there is so much mention; concerning men's conspiring in rebellion against God, affecting and attempting to climb heaven; concerning mankind being overwhelmed and destroyed by an universal deluge, and that by Divine justice, because of cruelty and oppression (with other enormous vices) generally reigning:

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Qua terra patet, fera regnat Erinys,  
In facinus jurasse putes: dent ocus omnes  
Quas meruere pati (sic stat sententia) poenas<sup>o</sup>.

*All over the earth, fierce rage doth reign; you would take them to have sworn to do mischief; let them all immediately undergo the pains which they*

coli, unum bonum, alterum malum continent literæ istorum.—  
Opp. Tom. vii. col. 138 E.]

<sup>a</sup> [Οἱ δὲ τὸν μὲν ἀμείνονα, Θεὸν, τὸν δὲ ἕτερον, δαίμονα καλοῦσιν.—  
de Isid. et Osir. Tom. vii. p. 456. ed. Reisk.]

<sup>o</sup> [Met. i. 241.]

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*have deserved; this is my resolution:* so God, in Ovid's style, declared the reason why he decreed to bring that sore calamity upon mankind: I might add that prophecy, commonly known, that this world shall finally perish by a general conflagration<sup>p</sup>.

These opinions and stories chiefly concern man; there were divers others concerning God and Religion, sprouting probably from the same root: that Divine goodness was the pure motive of God's making the world, seems to have been a tradition; implied by their saying, that *Love was the first, and the chief of the Gods*: *Πρώτιστον μὲν Ἔρωτα θεῶν μητίσατο πάντων*, said Parmenides; and, *Ἡδ' Ἔρος, ὃς πάντεσσι μεταπρέπει ἀθανάτοισιν*, said Hesiod<sup>q</sup>: that God made the world out of a chaos, or confused heap of matter; which is so plainly expressed in Hesiod, in Ovid, and in other ancient writers: that God did make or beget inferior insensible powers, (of great understanding and ability; whom they called gods, and the children of the sovereign God;) whom God immediately did converse with, and in royal manner did govern<sup>r</sup>; whom he did employ as spies and

<sup>p</sup> Vid. Clem. Alex. Strom. v. [Opp. Tom. ii. 722. *Συνάδει δὲ τοῖς τοῖς ἢ τραγῳδία διὰ τῶνδε.*

*Ἔσται γὰρ ἔσται καινὸς αἰῶνος χρόνος,*

*Ὅτ' ἂν πυρὸς γέμοντα θησαυρὸν σχάσῃ*

*Χρῦσωπος αἰθὴρ, ἢ δὲ βοσκηθεῖσα φλόξ*

*Ἄπαντα τὰπίγεια καὶ μετάρσια*

*φλέξει μανείσα— ]*

<sup>q</sup> Arist. Metaph. i. 4. [*Παρμενίδης γὰρ κατασκευάζων τὴν τοῦ παντὸς γένεσιν, "Πρώτιστον μὲν" φησιν "ἔρωτα θεῶν μητίσατο πάντων," Ἡσίοδος δὲ "Πάντων μὲν πρώτιστα χάος γένετ', αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα γαῖ' εὐρύστερος, Ἡδ' ἔρος, ὃς πάντεσσι μεταπρέπει ἀθανάτοισιν.*]

<sup>r</sup> Arist. Pol. i. [2. *Καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς δὲ διὰ τοῦτο πάντες φασὶ*

agents in providential administrations of human affairs; who did frequently appear unto, and familiarly converse with men; who do walk up and down the earth, observing men's actions; secretly assisting and comforting good men, restraining and crossing and punishing the bad; whereof we have so many instances in Homer, in Hesiod, and in other ancient writers; shewing as to those matters the general conceits of the old world: that God's especial presence and residence was above, in heaven, Aristotle expressly tells us was the belief of all men; *All men, saith he, have an opinion concerning Gods, and all men assign the highest place to the Gods, both Greeks and Barbarians*<sup>a</sup>.

That God's providence did extend itself to all particularities of affairs<sup>t</sup>; and that all things were ordered by him; he constantly exercising both benignity and justice suitably to the deserts and needs of men; encouraging and assisting, blessing and rewarding virtuous and pious men; relieving the distressed and helpless; controlling and chastising such as were outrageously unjust or impious: that God at seasons used to declare his mind to men (his approbation or displeasure in regard to their doings) by accidents preternatural or prodigious; did presignify future events; did impart foreknowledge of them in several ways; by dreams,

βασιλεύεσθαι, ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ μὲν ἔτι καὶ νῦν, οἱ δὲ τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐβασιλεύοντο· ὥσπερ δὲ καὶ τὰ εἶδη ἑαυτοῖς ἀφομοιοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὕτω καὶ τοὺς βίους τῶν θεῶν.]

<sup>a</sup> Πάντες γὰρ ἄνθρωποι περὶ θεῶν ἔχουσιν ὑπόληψιν, καὶ πάντες τὸν ἀνωτάτῳ τῷ θεῷ τόπον ἀποδιδύσασιν, καὶ Βάρβαροι καὶ Ἕλληνες.—De Cœlo, 1. 3.

<sup>t</sup> That God doth know all the actions, words, and inward thoughts of men.—Vid. Clem. Alex. Strom. v.

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by visions, by inspirations, &c.; to these opinions were answerable divers common practices: invoking Divine help in need; consulting God by oracle in case of ignorance or doubt; deprecating Divine vengeance<sup>u</sup>; making acknowledgments to God in hymns and praises; returning oblations for benefits received, both common and special; expiating guilt, and appeasing God's wrath by purgations and by sacrifices, (a practice peculiarly unlikely to proceed from any other reason than institution;) fortifying testimonies and promises by oath, or appeal to Divine knowledge and justice; invoking (upon condition) God's judgments upon themselves or others, what is called cursing; appointing priests for God's service, and yielding them extraordinary respect; consecrating temples and altars; making vows, and dedicating gifts; celebrating festivals; paying tithes (that very determinate part) of the fruits of the earth, of the spoils in war, of the gains in trade, by way of acknowledgment and thankfulness to the Donor and Disposer of all things: in which, and the like opinions and performances, (which it would be a long business particularly to insist on,) men's general concurrence doth fairly argue, that their Religion did peculiarly result from one simple institution common to mankind.

To these we might adjoin divers civil customs, wherein most nations did, from this cause probably, conspire: for instance, their counting by decades, or stopping at ten in their numerical computations;

<sup>u</sup> That there will be a future judgment, and rewards suited to the practices of men in this life.—Vid. Clem. Alex. Strom. v. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 721.]

which Aristotle says, all men, both Barbarians and Greeks, did use, noting, that so common an agreement could not arise from chance, but from nature<sup>x</sup>; but it is much more plausible to assign its rise to tradition: their having everywhere anciently the same number of letters, and the same names (or little varied) of them: their dividing time into weeks, (or systems of seven days;) of which practice to have been general, there be many plain testimonies: their beginning the *νυχθήμερον* (or account of the daily revolution of the heavens) from the night, grounded probably upon the report that night did precede day; as Hesiod phraseth it, that night did beget day<sup>y</sup>: their general abhorrence of incestuous copulations; of which there is, indeed, some ground in nature, but none, I suppose, so very clear or discernible, as might serve alone to produce such a consent; yea, perhaps, if one consider it, the whole business concerning matrimony will seem drawn from the head we discourse of: their great care of funerals, and decently interring the dead; which Cicero<sup>z</sup>, indeed, deduces as a consequence upon their belief of the soul's immortality. In fine, the consent of the old world

<sup>x</sup> Πάντες ἄνθρωποι, καὶ Βάρβαροι καὶ Ἕλληνες, εἰς τὰ δέκα καταρμυοῦσι—οὗ γὰρ δὴ ἀπὸ τύχης γε αὐτὸ ποιοῦντες φαίνονται, καὶ δεῖ τὸ δὲ δεῖ καὶ ἐπὶ πάντων, οὐκ ἀπὸ τύχης, ἀλλὰ φυσικόν.—Arist. Probl. xv. 3.

<sup>y</sup> Νυκτὸς δ' αὖτ' αἰθὴρ τε καὶ ἡμέρη ἕξουσιν.

Hesiod. Theog. [124.]

Dies natales, et mensium, et annorum initia sic observant, ut noctem dies subsequatur.—Cæs. de Bell. Gal. vi. [18.]

<sup>z</sup> In Læl. [cap. iv. Plus apud me antiquorum auctoritas valet vel nostrorum majorum qui mortuis tam religiosa jura tribuerunt, quod non fecissent profecto, si nihil ad eos pertinere arbitrantur.]



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in all moral notions of moment doth (to my sense) much imply the same thing; which notions although natural reason well used might suggest to all men, yet men, it seems, were never so generally disposed to reason well, as thereby alone to discern and approve unanimously the same truths; especially truths of this nature; which many men are apt to dislike, (as repugnant to their desires,) and consequently not ready to believe; which yet might easily by education be infused into their minds, and, by virtue of the prejudice thereby begot, (assisted by plausible reason and popular consent,) be preserved and rooted in them.

Now these (with divers more, perhaps, which they who are curiously inquisitive might observe) common persuasions, (whether concerning matters of universal truth, or of particular facts,) and those common usages having little or nothing of foundation apparent in man's nature, or in the clear reason of the thing, no prevailing appetite or inclination of man's soul prompting to them, no occasion commonly incident to human affairs being apt to suggest them, (at least divers of them; there being, indeed, rather an aptitude in men to disapprove and resist them, as cross to their dispositions,) we cannot reasonably deduce them from any other cause than such as we have assigned, men's being, as St Paul speaks, made of one blood, and receiving, as their nature, so their principles of opinion and practice from the same common parents.

Acts xvii.  
26.

To confirm which discourse, and to prevent further objections against it, we may consider, that however, perhaps, among some very barbarous

nations this principal tradition (together with others mentioned, attending thereon) may have been almost worn out by time and men's stupid negligence; that however also among some people, affecting semblances of singular wisdom, as among the Greeks, the matter thereof might fall under question, and some might doubt thereof, others contradict and deny it; yet most ancient histories (particularly that of Moses, far most ancient of all, and therefore, even secluding its special and more sacred authority, of all most credible) do attest them to have been, in substance, universally received, running with a strong and clear current among the eastern people, (the Chaldeans, Phœnicians, and Egyptians;) who that they were the most ancient inhabitants of the earth, from whom the rest of mankind was propagated, the antiquity of empires among them, the first use of letters, the rise of arts, the greater progress in all kinds of civil culture, (which things argue a longer continuance in one place and state,) beside express records of story and visible monuments of things performed among them, do sufficiently declare; whose consent therefore doth in reason, so far as serves our purpose, involve the consent of all mankind; and doth confirm those notions to have flowed from the clear spring of our first parents their instruction.

It is also true, I must confess, that these original traditions, (concerning the being and providence of God,) as must necessarily happen not only by the malice of evil spirits, but from man's natural infirmity and proneness to change, even to the worse, (as also from men's aptness to mistake,

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from rude ignorance, from wantonness of fancy, from craftiness in promoting designs of ambition and covetousness by introducing novelties, and from such like causes,) did soon begin to be adulterated by many corrupt mixtures, did by degrees degenerate exceedingly into various shapes of superstition, falsehood, and futility. Yet even so was Judaism depraved by the Scribes; and Christianity itself hath been strangely debased by a long course of ignorant and bad times; yet who can doubt but both these were derived from one pure instruction; that of Moses, this of Christ our Lord? That it might so fare with the primitive traditions of Religion is evident; that it really did so, we have even the judgment and assertion of Aristotle himself, in those remarkable words of his to this purpose: *There were, saith he, things conveyed traditionally by the primitive and ancient men, and left in a fabulous dress to their posterity; that there are these Gods, and that Divinity maintains (or encompasses) all nature: but other things were to these fictitiously superinduced for persuasion of the vulgar sort, and for the use of laws and public commodity: hence they speak of the Gods, as having a human shape, or resembling other living creatures, and other things consequent upon, or agreeable to these sayings; from which things if we separate that only which was first delivered, that they deemed the Gods the first beings, we may suppose what they said divinely spoken. And it is according to probability, all art and philosophy being, as might possibly, often invented and lost again, that even these opinions of them have as relics been preserved until now: the opinion then*

of our fathers, and that which came from the first men, is only thus far manifest to us\*.

Thus did the Philosopher, with a sagacity worthy so great a man, discern, that through that coarser ore, consisting in great part of dross and feculency, (taken from the fondness or fraud of human invention, or from diabolical suggestion,) a pure vein of truth did run, drawn from the source of primitive tradition; from which being supposed, we do infer, what he acknowledges divinely said, that there doth exist one first being or substance, incomprehensibly excellent in all perfection. The like observations and judgments might be produced out of divers other wise men, (Plato, Cicero, and the like,) who acknowledge and urge this common tradition as a good argument of the truths we maintain, as to the substance of them; yet scruple not to dissent from and to reprehend the vulgar errors and bad customs which had crept in and became annexed to them. But let thus much suffice for this whole argument; being the last of those I intend to use for the proof of that fundamental point, which is the root of all Religion and piety.

\* Παραδέδοται δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων καὶ παλαιῶν, ἐν μύθου σχήματι καταλειμμένα τοῖς ὕστερον, ὅτι θεοὶ τέ εἰσιν οὗτοι, καὶ περιέχει τὸ θεῖον τὴν ὅλην φύσιν. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ μυθικῶς ἤδη προσήκται πρὸς τὴν πειθῶ τῶν πολλῶν, καὶ πρὸς τὴν εἰς τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὸ συμφέρον χρῆσιν ἀνθρωποειδῆς τε γὰρ τούτους, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων ὁμοίους τισὶ λέγουσι, καὶ τοῖτοις ἕτερα ἀκόλουθα, καὶ παραπλήσια τοῖς εἰρημένοις. ὃν εἴ τις χωρίσας αὐτὸ λάβοι μόνον τὸ πρῶτον, ὅτι θεοὺς φέροντο τὰς πρῶτας οὐσίας εἶναι, θεῶς ἂν εἰρῆσθαι νομίσειεν, καὶ κατὰ τὸ εἶκος πολλὰκις εἰρημένης εἰς τὸ δυνατόν ἐκάστης καὶ τέχνης, καὶ φιλοσοφίας, καὶ πάλιν φθειρομένων, καὶ ταύτας τὰς δόξας ἐκείνων, ὅσον λείψανα περυσινῶσθαι μέχρι τοῦ νῦν. ἢ μὲν οὖν πάτριος δόξα, καὶ ἢ παρὰ τῶν πρῶτων, ἐπὶ τοσούτων ἡμῶν φανερά μόνον.—Arist. Metaphys. xi. 8.

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I have produced several arguments to that purpose, (or rather several kinds of argument, each containing many subordinate ones,) most proper, I conceive, and apt to have a general efficacy upon men's minds, in begetting and confirming a belief thereof. Each of them have indeed, to my seeming, even singly taken, a force irresistible; and the greatest in its kind, that any such conclusion, not immediately apparent to sense, is capable of. The existence of any one cause in natural philosophy, is not there demonstrable by effects in any proportion so many or various, so conspicuous or certain. No question can be determined by an authority so ample and comprehensive, so express and peremptory. No doctrine can to its confirmation allege so general, so constant, so uniform a tradition. No matter of fact can be assured by testimonies so many in number, so various in kind, so weighty in quality, as those, upon which this conclusion doth stand. And if we join together all these, in themselves so considerable and powerful forces, how can we be able to resist them? how can we dare to doubt of that, which they conspire to infer? When, I say, to the universal harmony of nature the common voice of nations doth yield its consent; when with the ordinary course of things, so many extraordinary accidents do concur in vote; when that which so many reasons prove, continual tradition also teaches; what can the result be, but firm persuasion in every wise and honest heart of the proposition so confirmed? except we can suppose, that, by a fatal conspiracy, all the appearances in nature, and all the generations of men; the highest reason, and the

greatest authority imaginable, have combined to deceive us. SERM.  
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In the precedent Discourses I have endeavoured to prove the existence of God by arguments, which do, indeed, more immediately evince those three principal attributes, wisdom, power, and goodness incomprehensible, but which also consequentially declare all other the attributes commonly esteemed ingredients of that notion, which answers to the name of God; (absolutely put, and without any adjunct limiting and diminishing it;) all those attributes, which Aristotle's definition, *The eternal most excellent living thing*<sup>b</sup>, or that of Tertullian, *The supreme great thing*<sup>c</sup>, do include or imply; namely, his unity first; then his eternity and indefectibility; his immense omnipresence, his spirituality; his justice and veracity; his Sovereign Majesty and authority; with the like connected to those (for I cannot prosecute all the Divine perfections, according to that multiplicity of distinction, which our manner of conceit and expression is wont to assign.)

The uniformity, concord, and perfect harmony which appear in the constitution and conservation of things; their conspiring to one end, their continuing in the same order and course, do plainly declare the unity of God; even as the lasting peace

<sup>b</sup> Φαμέν δὲ τὸν Θεὸν εἶναι ζῶν ἀίδιον ἄριστον.—Arist. Metaph. XI. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Summum magnum, et forma, et ratione, et vi, et potestate.—Tertull. adv. Marc. I. 3. [Opp. p. 367 A.]

Ἡ μακαρία φύσις· ἡ ἀφθονος ἀγαθότης· τὸ ἀγαπητὸν πᾶσι τοῖς λόγον μετεिल्φόσι· τὸ πολυπόθητον κάλλος· ἡ ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων· ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ζωῆς· τὸ νοερὸν φῶς· ἡ ἀπρόσιτος σοφία.—Bas. in Hexæm. Hom. I. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 3 E.]

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of a commonwealth (composed of persons different in affections and humour) argues one law, that regulates and contains them; as the orderly march of an army shews it managed by one conduct; as the uniformity of a house, or of a town, declares it contrived by one architect.

And hereto also the common suffrage of mankind doth in a manner agree: for, however that they worshipped a multitude of inferior deities, yet that there was one Supreme God, Author and Governor of the rest, and of all things beside, transcending in power and wisdom, and all kind of perfection, was evidently the common opinion; whom therefore we see the poets (the best interpreters of the popular opinions) do style the *Father of Gods and men; the King of the Gods; the most high, most great, most excellent, &c.*<sup>d</sup> The greater popularity, as Tertullian speaks, of mankind, even when idolatry obscured the sense of Divine providence, did however appropriate the name of God especially to one, in their usual expressions; being wont to say, *If God grant; and, What pleases God; and, I commend it to God.*<sup>e</sup> And if the vulgar had in some measure this conceit, the wiser sort appear to have had more clear and full apprehensions and persuasions concerning it: Plato<sup>f</sup> refers the making of the world to one whom he calls Πατέρα καὶ Ποιητήν (*the Father and Maker of*

<sup>d</sup> Ὑψίστος, μέγιστος, κράτιστος.

<sup>e</sup> Major popularitas generis humani—etiam tantam idololatria dominationem obumbrante, seorsum tamen illum, quasi proprio nomine Deum perhibent; et Deum Deorum; et si Deus dederit; et quod Deo placet; et Deo commendo.—adv. Marc. i. 10. [Opp. p. 370 c.]

<sup>f</sup> In Tim. [28 c.]

the universe); Aristotle, when he hath occasion to speak of God, doth usually speak in the singular; so do other philosophers, as the Stoics, in their famous precept *Deum sequi*, (to follow God, that is, to acquiesce in, or submit to Divine providence;) sometime they do expressly signify this to be their opinion: *There are many popular Gods*, said Antisthenes, *but one natural one*<sup>g</sup>: *Being really one*, saith the Author *de Mundo*, *he hath many names; according to the several affections he discovers, and the operations he exerts*<sup>h</sup>; with whom Seneca thus agrees: *So often as you please, you may diversely name the Author of things: there may be so many appellations of him, as there be gifts or offices and operations: him our people fancy to be Father Bacchus, and Hercules, and Mercury; call him also Nature, Fate, Fortune: all these are but names of the same God, variously using his power*<sup>i</sup>. If they ever speak of Gods plurally, they are to be understood to speak with the like opinion of them, as we of angels, that is, of invisible, intelligent powers, created by the supreme God, dependent of him, subject to him<sup>k</sup>; Marsilius Ficinus's caution concerning Plato being

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<sup>g</sup> Apud Cic. de Nat. Deor. i. [13. 31. Antisthenes in eo libro, qui physicus inscribitur, populares Deos multos, naturalem unum esse dicens—]

<sup>h</sup> Cap. vii. [Εἰς δὲ ὧν πολυνόμος ἐστὶ, κατονομαζόμενος τοῖς πάθεσι πᾶσιν ἄπερ αὐτὸς νοεχομῶι.]

<sup>i</sup> Quoties voles, tibi licet aliter hunc auctorem rerum nostrarum compellare.—Tot appellationes ejus possunt esse, quot munera. Hunc et Liberum patrem, et Herculem, ac Mercurium nostri putant.—Sic hunc Naturam vocas, Fatum, Fortunam; omnia ejusdem Dei nomina sunt, varie utentis sua potestate.—Sen. de Benef. iv. [8, 9]

<sup>k</sup> See that most remarkable saying of Sophocles apud. Grot. in Excerpt. p. 149. Εἰς ταῖς ἀληθείαις, εἰς ἐστὶν θεός, &c.



SERM.  
VIII.

applicable to the rest: *Sed ne turbet quasso Deorum numerus, quem non turbat numerus angelorum. Nihil enim plus apud Platonem tot possunt Di, quam apud nos tot angeli, totque beati*<sup>1</sup>. So much for God's unity.

As to his eternity: if God made all things, he could not receive being from another; and he who made this world, what reason can there be to suppose him to be from another? Nor can anything receive a being from itself, or from mere nothing spring up into being; therefore the Maker of the world must be eternal. Something of necessity must be eternal, otherwise nothing could have been at all; other things shew themselves to have proceeded from the wisdom, power, and goodness of One; whence that One is eternal; and so all nations have consented that God is.

That he is immortal and immutable doth also follow plainly: for he not depending for his being, or anything thereto belonging, upon any other thing, neither can he depend for his continuance or conservation; having power superior to all things, as having conferred on them whatever of power they have, nothing can oppose him, or make any prevalent impression upon him, so as to destroy or alter anything in him.

Also, from his making, his upholding, his governing all things, is consequent, that he was ever and is everywhere: where his power is, there his hand is; for every action with effect requires a conjunction of the agent and patient; nothing can act upon what is distant. That with his presence and power he doth penetrate all things,

<sup>1</sup> Mars. Fic. in Arg. lib. x. de Leg. [p. 941. Francof. 1602.]

operating insensibly and imperceptibly, doth argue the spirituality of his being; and that he doth not consist of such matter (so extended, so divisible) as those things do, which we by sense perceive. SERM.  
VIII.

His overreaching wisdom implies him incapable of being deceived; and his overbearing power signifieth that he doth not need to deceive; and his transcendent goodness proves him unwilling to deceive: the like we may say of doing wrong; whence are consequent his perfect veracity and justice.

Lastly, the excellency of his nature, the eminency of his wisdom and power, the abundance of his goodness; as also, his having given being, then preserving it to all things, do infer his rightful title to supreme dominion; and accordingly, that all love, all obedience, all praise and veneration are due to him; according to the devout acknowledgment of those blessed elders: *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive the glory and honour and power,* REV. iv.  
11.  
*(or authority,) because thou hast made all things; and for thy will they are and were created.*

## I Believe in God.

### SERMON IX.

#### THE BEING OF GOD PROVED FROM SUPERNATURAL EFFECTS.

JOHN V. 17.

*But Jesus answered them, My Father hitherto worketh, and I work.*

SERM.  
IX.

Gen. ii. 2.

Ps. cxlviii.  
6.

WHEN at first by the Divine power this visible system of things was consummated and settled in that course wherein it now stands, it is said that *God rested from all his work which he had made*: the plain meaning of which saying is, that God had so framed all the parts of nature, and several kinds of things, and disposed them into such an order, and inserted into them such principles of action, that thereafter (without more than an ordinary conservation or concurrence from him) things generally should continue in their being, station, and course, without any great change, for ever; that is, for so long as God had determined, or till their due period was run through<sup>a</sup>: *He established them*, as the Psalmist speaks, *for ever and ever; he made a decree, that*

<sup>a</sup> Ἔστιν δ' οὖν καταπεπαυκέναι, τὸ τὴν τάξιν τῶν γενομένων εἰς πάντα χρόνον ἀπαραβάτως φυλάσσεσθαι τεταχέναι, καὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς ἀταξίας ἕκαστον τῶν κτισμάτων καταπεπαυκέναι.—Clem. Alex. Strom. vi. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 813.]

shall not pass : His word was settled in the heavens, and his faithfulness unto all generations : they continue this day according to his ordinances : He made a covenant with day and night, and appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth : thus God rested and ceased from his work of creation. But it is not said, nor intended, that God did absolutely give over or forbear working ; that he withdrew his care, and tied up, as it were, his own hands by a resolution not to intermeddle more with anything, but to enjoy a kind of Epicurean ease and ἀπραξία<sup>b</sup>. No : his wisdom hath so ordered things, that there should be need and reason of his acting continually ; that there should be frequent occasion of variously displaying his glorious attributes ; of exercising his power, of demonstrating his goodness. Indeed, as to beings merely natural and unintelligent, there were no need of his doing more ; for they are all thoroughly his obedient servants, and exactly fulfil his word ; never straggling from the station in which he placed them ; never transgressing the rule that he prescribed them : but he hath also made other beings, by nature incapable of such uniformity and settlement ; very free, and therefore very mutable ; to the well governing of whom therefore a continual intention and activity is requisite. For the use and benefit of which beings, as a great part of nature was designed and made by God, so it was not unmeet, that for their sake he should sometime alter the course of nature, and cross or check the stream of things. The fuller and clearer illustra-

SERM.  
IX.

Ps. cxix.  
89, &c.  
Jer. v. 22 ;  
xxxiii. 25 ;  
xxxi. 35.

Ps. cxix.  
91 ;  
cxlviii. 8.  
Isai. xl.  
26.  
Ps. civ. 9,  
19.

John ix. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Ἀγαθὸς γὰρ ὢν, εἰ παύσεται πότε ἀγαθοεργῶν, καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι παύσεται.—Id. ibid.

SERM.  
IX.

Exod. vii.

5.

Deut. iv.

35.

Dan. iv.

25.

tion of his glory, the shewing that all things do not pass on in a fatal track; the confirming that he made nature, because he can command and control it; the demonstration of his especial care over and love toward men, in suspending or thwarting his own established laws and decrees, as it were, for their sake; the exciting men the more to mind God, and impressing on them a respect toward him; the begetting faith in him, and hope in his providence, are fair accounts, for which God sometimes should perform (even in a manner notorious and remarkable to us) actions extraordinary. And that God doeth so, we learn in the words I read from the mouth of Truth itself; whose affirmation (for persuading the incredulous) I intend to second with particular instances, attested to by reasonable proof, suitable to the nature of the matter; and this with design to infer from such operations (as effects assignable to no other cause) the existence of God; having endeavoured formerly to deduce the same from the common ordinary works, appearing in both worlds, natural and human. And as we before distinguished the ordinary works or actions, so here we shall distinguish the extraordinary ones, into two sorts; into those which are above or against the course (or power) of nature; and those, which surmount or cross the stream of human affairs; such as being evidenced and granted to have been really performed, either all men will believe, or the wisest men will readily confess the being of such a cause as we assert.

I. Let us first consider the first kind: and of these we may generally affirm, that no man

can deny many such to have been performed, without giving the lie to the most authentic records of History that are or have been extant; without extremely disparaging the credit of mankind; without impeaching all nations and all ages not only of extrémé weakness, (in credulous assent unto, regarding and relying upon such appearances; which not only the vulgar sort, but even princes and statesmen, learned men and philosophers<sup>e</sup> everywhere have done,) but of notorious baseness and dishonesty, in devising and reporting them; without, indeed, derogating utterly from all testimony that can be rendered to any matter of fact, and rendering it wholly insignificant; for that if we may disbelieve these reports, there is no reason we should believe anything that is told us.

SERM.  
IX.

To this kind we may refer the presignification and prediction of future events, especially those which are contingent, and depend upon man's free choice; to the doing of which nothing is more evident in itself, nor more acknowledged by all, than that a power or wisdom supernatural is required; concerning which we have the (not despicable) consent of all times, continued down from the remotest antiquity, that frequently they have been made: *There is*, saith Cicero, *an ancient opinion, drawn even from the heroical times*, (that is, from the utmost bounds of time spoken of,) *that there is among men a certain divination, which the*

<sup>e</sup> Nostrum quidem, inquit [Socrates,] humanum est consilium; sed de rebus et obscuris et incertis ad Apollinem censeo referendum; ad quem etiam Athenienses publice de majoribus rebus semper retulerunt.—Cic. de Divin. [I. 54, 122.]

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*Greeks call prophecy, (or inspiration,) that is, a presension, and knowledge of future things<sup>d</sup>. And of this kind even profane story doth afford many instances; there, indeed, having scarce happened any considerable revolution in state, or action in war, whereof we do not find mentioned in history some presignification or prediction<sup>e</sup>; whereof though many were, indeed, dark and ambiguous, or captious and fallacious, yet some were very clear and express, (according as God was in his wisdom pleased to use the ministry of those spirits, which immediately conveyed them, in directing men for their good, or misguiding them for their deserved punishment;) such as were, for instance, that concerning Cyrus's conquering the Lydians<sup>f</sup>; that concerning the battle at Salamis<sup>g</sup>; that concerning the battle of Leuctra<sup>h</sup>; and divers others which*

<sup>d</sup> Vetus opinio est, jam usque ab heroicis ducta temporibus, eaque et populi Romani, et omnium hominum firmata consensu, versari quandam inter homines divinationem, quam Græci *μαντικήν* appellant, id est, præsentionem et scientiam rerum futurarum.—De Div. [i. 1, 1.]

<sup>e</sup> Gentem quidem nullam video neque tam humanam atque doctam, neque tam immanem, tamque barbaram, quæ non significari futura, et a quibusdam intelligi, prædicique posse censeat.—Id. [Ibid.]

<sup>f</sup> [Ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἂν ἡμίονος βασιλεὺς Μήδοισι γένηται, καὶ τότε, λυδὲ ποδαβρὲ, πολυψήφιδά παρ' Ἑρμον Φεύγειν, μὴδὲ μένειν, μὴδ' αἰδεῖσθαι κακὸς εἶναι.—Herod. i. 55.]

<sup>g</sup> [Ὁ θεὸς Σαλαμῖς, ἀπολείς δὲ σὺ τέκνα γυναικῶν, ἥ που σκιδναμένης Δημήτερος, ἡ συνιούσης.—Id. vii. 141.]

<sup>h</sup> Pausan. Lib. ix. [cap. 14.]

[Λεῦκτρα τέ μοι σκίοεντα μέλει, καὶ Ἀλήσιον οὐδας  
καὶ μοι τῶν Σκεδάσου μέλετον δυσπενθέε κούρα.  
Ἐνθα μάχη πολὺδακρυς ἐπέρχεται· οὐδέ τις αὐτὴν  
φράσσεται ἀνθρώπων, πρὶν κούριον ἀγλαὸν ἤβην  
Δωρίεις δλέσωσ', ὅταν αἴσμιον ἡμᾶρ ἐπέλθῃ,  
Τουτάκι δ' ἔστι Κερησιδὸς ἀλώσιμος, ἄλλοτε δ' οὐχί.]

occur in stories composed by wise men of the wisest nations<sup>1</sup>; even the life of one man, (good Socrates,) described by excellent persons his most intimate acquaintance, (Xenophon and Plato,) affords divers; and Cicero acquaints us, that Chrysippus did collect (and it is great pity his collection hath perished) an innumerable store of them, all confirmed by good authority and testimony<sup>k</sup>. I cannot stand to relate many of them particularly, or discuss the validity of relations concerning such instances: I shall only say, that discourse in Tully, concerning the oracle at Delphi, which may be extended to the rest of that sort, doth not seem contemptible: *I defend*, saith he, *this one thing; that never would that oracle have been so renowned, nor so stuffed with the gifts of all nations and kings, if every age had not experienced the truth of those oracles*<sup>1</sup>; for it is hard, that a mere imposture should, to the expense and damage of so many persons, so long continue in credit. I will adjoin but one observation to this purpose, that even among those Pagans who regarded these things, it was known and acknowledged, that such portending, or predicting future things, although immediately conveyed by inferior powers, did originally proceed from the one Supreme God: so the wise Poet implies, when he makes the prophetic Fury say, that she received her prediction from

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<sup>1</sup> Vid. Cie. de Divin. [i. 43.] de Nat. Deor. ii. [3.]

<sup>k</sup> Collegit innumerabilia Oracula Chrysippus, nec ullum sine locuplete auctore, atque teste.—De Div. [i. 19, 37.]

<sup>1</sup> Defendo unum hoc: nunquam illud oraculum Delphis tam celebre, et tam clarum fuisset, neque tantis donis refertum omnium populorum atque regum, nisi omnis ætas oraculorum illorum veritatem esset experta, &c.—Id. [ibid.]



SERM. IX. Apollo, and Apollo from the Almighty Father;

Accipite ergo, animis atque hæc mea figite dicta:  
Quæ Phœbo Pater omnipotens, mihi Phœbus Apollo  
Prædixit, vobis Furiarum ego maxima pando<sup>m</sup>:

where Servius<sup>n</sup> notes, that even Apollo (he who among their deities was in chief esteem for rendering oracles) is said to derive his knowledge from Jove, or the Sovereign God.

It seemed not amiss to touch those instances of this kind which profane story yields, but the Holy Scriptures afford most evident and eminent ones; some of them extant in books written and in use long before the events foretold: as that of Abraham's concerning his posterity sojourning and being afflicted in Egypt four hundred years; of the Prophet concerning Josiah, (some hundred years before his birth,) that such a prince should be, and what he should do; of Isaiah concerning Cyrus by name, his conquests, his restoring the Jews from exile, his re-edifying Jerusalem; of Jeremiah concerning the captivity, and its duration for seventy years; of Daniel concerning the grand revolutions of empire in the world<sup>o</sup>, (wherein the achievements of Alexander and his successors are so plainly described, that Porphyrius could not but acknowledge the consonancy of them to the events;) of our Saviour concerning the siege and destruction of Jerusalem: the truth of which reports, although we should allow those writings which contain them an authority no greater than human, there were no reason to question; since most of those writings

Gen. xv.  
13.

1 Kings  
xiii. 2.

Isai. xliv.  
& xlv.

Jer. xxv.

12;

xxix. 10.

Dan. ix. 2;

viii. 21, &c.

Luke xix.

43.

Matt. xxiv.

2.

<sup>m</sup> Virg. *Æn.* iii. [250.]

<sup>n</sup> Notandum Apollinem quæ dicit a Jove cognoscere.

<sup>o</sup> Vid. Chrys. Cont. Jud. ii. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 328.

were extant a good time before the events specified. SERM.  
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Now if but one of these innumerable instances were true, if ever one event hath been presignified or predicted, (and it were a hard case, that among so many not one should prove so,) it sufficiently evinces what we intend.

But to our purpose especially do appertain the works usually styled miraculous, which exceed or contravene the ordinary course or power of nature; which therefore all men will readily confess per- John iii. 2.  
formable only by an agent in power or knowledge exceeding their comprehension—(such as are, for example, the fire being withheld from burning, and the waters from flowing; the sick being, without medicinal applications, cured of long chronical distempers; limbs being, in the like manner, restored to persons maimed, and senses to them who from their birth, or otherwise for a long time, had been deprived of their use; restoring the dead to life, a thing which Pliny mentions as impossible in his conceit to God himself<sup>p</sup>, and the like;)—of these, although all nations have had so many performed among them, as sufficed to breed everywhere a constant opinion that a Divine power did frequently interpose, so as to control and overbear the force of nature, (which opinion could not in likelihood so generally and constantly prevail without any ground at all<sup>q</sup>;) yet the Holy Scriptures do most fully and clearly testify concerning them to have

<sup>p</sup> Imperfectæ vero in homine naturæ præcipua solatia, ne Deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, —nec mortales æternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos. Nat. Hist. II. 7.

<sup>q</sup> Φήμη δ' οὐτις πάντων ἀπολλυται ἤντινα πολλοὶ  
Λαοὶ φημίζουσι.— [Hesiod. Op. et Di. 763.]

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been in great number performed, for the confirmation of that Divine truth and will of God, which they declare him pleased to reveal; for guiding men into, or settling them in right opinions or good practices; for disabusing and withdrawing them from ways of error and vice; for the encouragement and relief of good, or the restraint, discouragement, and chastisement of evil men; which in reason are the most proper causes, why by such a Being, as we suppose, so wise, so good, such works should be effected; the testimonies concerning which there can be no good reason assigned of refusing, but very great to admit them, as we hope at another time satisfactorily to declare. Indeed, God's patefaction of himself, his mind, his will, (in many kinds and manners particularly to the Fathers of old, and afterward generally to all the world by his Son; on purpose sent from heaven to publish and accomplish his designs of mercy and favour to all mankind,) accompanied with so many prodigious works of power, and so many glorious circumstances of providence conspicuous to all the world, and withal so accommodated as to beget first of all this assurance in us, that a Divine power doth exist and preside over all affairs both natural and human, is an argument which in all honest and well-disposed minds (not possessed with false prejudices, nor depraved by vicious inclinations) cannot but obtain effect; the fuller urging and confirming of which I shall refer to another season, when it will serve a more general purpose, even the confirming not only this part, but even the whole of our Religion in gross: I shall only now briefly say concerning them, that

considering the works themselves, they were in number so many and various; in kind so great and high; as to the manner of performance so naked and open, (being done in the face, and exposed to the senses of all men;) that there could be no reason to suspect any juggling or human artifice used about them: considering the witnesses that asserted them, they were persons who by their writings, by their behaviour, by the effect of their endeavours, approved themselves very intelligent; in their intentions very honest and free from any sinister design, in their conversations very innocent and virtuous, in their attestation very consistent and constant; so that there could be desired no witnesses of any fact better qualified, or more credible than they: considering the design of those works, there could be none more noble and excellent, more worthy of God, more beneficial to man; it being chiefly the confirmation of a doctrine, incomparably the most reasonable and most useful that ever appeared among men; productive of the best fruits, apt (being entertained heartily) to make men highly good and truly happy; to promote the honour of God and the interests of goodness; to secure as much as can be both the public and private welfare of mankind. Considering which things, we can have no good reason to distrust the performance of such works, by authentic records, by constant tradition attested to us.

I may adjoin to the former sorts of extraordinary actions, some other sorts, the consideration of which, although not so directly and immediately, may serve our main design; those (which

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the general opinion of mankind hath approved, and manifold testimony hath declared frequently to happen) which concern apparitions from another world, as it were, of beings unusual; concerning spirits haunting persons and places, (these discerned by all senses, and by divers kinds of effects;) of which the old world (the ancient poets and historians) did speak so much, and of which all ages have afforded several attestations very direct and plain, and having all advantages imaginable to beget credence; concerning visions made unto persons of especial eminency and influence, (to priests and prophets;) concerning presignifications of future events by dreams; concerning the power of enchantments, implying the co-operation of invisible powers; concerning all sorts of intercourse and confederacy, formal or virtual, with bad spirits: all which things he that shall affirm to be mere fiction and delusion, must thereby with exceeding immodesty and rudeness charge the world with extreme both vanity and malignity; many, if not all, worthy historians, of much inconsiderateness or fraud; most lawgivers, of great silliness and rashness; most judicatories, of high stupidity or cruelty; a vast number of witnesses, of the greatest malice or madness; all which have concurred to assert these matters of fact.

It is true, no question, but there have been many vain pretences, many false reports, many unjust accusations, and some undue decisions concerning these matters; that the vulgar sort is apt enough to be abused about them; that even intelligent and considerate men may at a distance

in regard to some of them be imposed upon; but, as there would be no false gems obtruded, if there were no true ones found in nature; as no counterfeit coin would appear, were there no true one current; so neither can we well suppose that a confidence in some to feign, or a readiness in most to believe stories of this kind could arise, or should subsist, without some real ground, or without such things having in gross somewhat of truth and reality. However, that the wiser and more refined sort of men, highest in parts and improvements both from study and experience, (indeed the flower of every commonwealth; statesmen, lawgivers, judges, and priests,) upon so many occasions of great importance, after most deliberate scanning such pretences and reports, should so often suffer themselves to be deluded, to the extreme injury of particular persons concerned, to the common abusing of mankind, to the hazard of their own reputation in point of wisdom and honesty, seems nowise reasonable to conceive. In likelihood rather the whole kind of all these things, were it altogether vain and groundless, would upon so frequent and so mature discussions have appeared to be so, and would consequently long since have been disowned, exploded, and thrust out of the world; for, as upon this occasion it is said in Tully, *Time wipeth out groundless conceits, but confirms that which is founded in nature, and real*<sup>r</sup>.

Now if the truth and reality of these things, all or any of them, inferring the existence of

<sup>r</sup> Opiniones enim commenta dies delet: naturæ judicia confirmat.—De Nat. Deor. II. [2, 5.]

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powers invisible, at least inferior ones, though much superior to us in all sort of ability, be admitted, it will at least (as removing the chief obstacles of incredulity) confer much to the belief of that supreme Divinity, which our Discourse strives to maintain.

I must acknowledge, that both these arguments, drawn from testimonies concerning matters of fact, (and indeed all other arguments,) were invalid and insignificant, could any demonstration or any argument weighty enough be brought to shew the impossibility of such a thing to exist, as we infer to exist from them. But, as it is a very easy thing (so whoever is versed in speculation and reasoning about things cannot but find) to prove many things possible to be, which do not actually exist; so it is hard to prove the impossibility of a thing's being; yea there is plainly no other mean of doing this, than the manifesting an evident repugnance between being itself, and some property assigned to that thing; or between several properties attributed thereto; as if we should suppose a square circle, or a round square to exist. But in our case no man can shew such a repugnance<sup>a</sup>; between being and wisdom, power or goodness, there is no inconsistency surely; nor can any man evince one to be between being and coexisting with matter, or penetrating body; between being and insensibility; between being and any other property which we ascribe to God; nor

<sup>a</sup> It is not enough to say peremptorily, it is nonsense; or that you cannot understand how it should be; such proceedings are intolerably both insolent and vain.

Εἰσὶ δὲ οὗτοι (ἀμύητοι) οἱ οὐδὲν ἄλλο οἰόμενοι εἶναι, ἢ οὐδ' ἂν δύνωνται ἀπρὶς τοῖν χειροῖν λαβέσθαι.—Plat. Theæt. [155 E.]

is there any clashing between those properties themselves: it is therefore impossible to shew that God cannot exist; and therefore it is unreasonable to disbelieve the testimonies (so many, so pregnant) that declare him to exist. SERM.  
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Men indeed, who affix themselves to things which their sense offers<sup>t</sup>, may be indisposed to abstract their minds from such things, may be unapt to frame conceptions about any other sort of things; but to think there can be no other things than such as we see and feel, that nothing, endued with other properties than such as these objected to our sense have, can exist, implies a great dulness of apprehension, a greater shortness of reason and judgment; it is much like the simplicity of a rustic, who, because he never was above three miles from home, cannot imagine the world to reach ten miles further; and will look upon all that is told him, concerning things more distant, to be false, and forged to abuse him. I add, that these men's incredulity is hence more inexcusable, because the possibility of such a being's existence, the compatibility and concurrence of such properties in one thing, is (as we elsewhere have largely shewed) by a very plain instance declared, even by that being within every man, which in a degree partakes of all those properties.

I shall leave this head of discourse, with this one remark: that they are much mistaken, who place a kind of wisdom in being very incredulous, and unwilling to assent to any testimony, how full and clear soever: for this, indeed, is not wisdom,

<sup>t</sup> Affigit humo divinæ particulam auræ.—

[Hor. Sat. II. 2. 79.]



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but the worst kind of folly. It is folly, because it causes ignorance and mistake, with all the consequents of these; and it is very bad, as being accompanied with disingenuity, obstinacy, rudeness, uncharitableness, and the like bad dispositions; from which credulity itself, the other extreme sort of folly, is exempt. Compare we, I say, these two sorts of fools; the credulous fool, who yields his assent hastily upon any slight ground; and the suspicious fool, who never will be stirred by any the strongest reason or clearest testimony; we shall find the latter in most respects the worst of the two; that his folly arises from worse causes, hath worse adjuncts, produces worse effects. Credulity may spring from an airy complexion, or from a modest opinion of one's self; suspiciousness hath its birth from an earthy temper of body, or from self-conceit in the mind: that carries with it being civil and affable, and apt to correct an error; with this a man is intractable, unwilling to hear, stiff and incorrigible in his ignorance or mistake: that begets speed and alacrity in action; this renders a man heavy and dumpish, slow and tedious in his resolutions and in his proceedings: both include want of judgment; but this pretending to more thereof, becomes thereby more dangerous. Forward rashness, which is the same with that, may sometimes, like an acute disease, undo a man sooner; but stupid dotage, little differing from this, is (like a chronical distemper) commonly more mischievous, and always more hard to cure. In fine, were men in their other affairs, or in ordinary converse, so diffident to plain testimony, as some do seem to be in these matters concerning

Religion, they would soon feel great inconveniences to proceed thence; their business would stick, their conversation would be distasteful; they would be much more offensive, and no less ridiculous than the most credulous fool in the world. While men therefore so perversely distrustful affect to seem wise, they affect really to be fools; and practise according to the worst sort of folly.

Thus have I, although very cursorily, considered the first kind of works extraordinary that appear in the world: I proceed briefly to touch the other sort, observable in the transaction of human affairs; for even in these there do happen things in a sort miraculous, or prodigious; according to reasonable estimation surpassing the common efficacy of human causes; by which God in a language more express, as it were, and in a louder tone, declares his presence and providence here; so that they must be very deaf and stupid, who do not from them learn lessons of piety and reverence toward God; who do not in them hear Heaven thundering forth that proclamation to us all: *Discite justitiam moniti*<sup>u</sup>. For instance,

I We may observe, when anywhere things are come to such a pass, that iniquity and outrage do extremely prevail, so that the most of men's lives become intolerably grievous, in such cases often the state of things, how seemingly stable and robust soever, in a manner sudden and strange, by means to appearance small and weak, to be overturned, and reduced to a more tolerable form; no strugglings of might, no fetches of policy, no circumspection or industry of man availing to

<sup>u</sup> [Virg. *Æn.* vi. 620.]

SERM. uphold it, an invisible hand checking all such  
 IX. force, and crossing all such devices: *A stone cut*  
 Dan. ii. *out of the mountains without hands, (that is, a*  
 45; *slender instrument coming forth out of some remote or secret place, without any considerable influence of human endeavour,) breaking in pieces the iron, and the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; there being raised up instantly a Moses, or a Maccabæus; an Ehud, or a Gideon; a Dion, or a Timoleon, by a single stroke, or a sudden impression, to deliver oppressed nations from slavery.*

2 How many examples do experience and history afford us of justice and vengeance, in ways for their kind and for their circumstances very remarkable, executed in the face of the world upon persons (such as Corah and his fellows, Sennacherib, Herod, Brennus) notoriously wicked and mischievous, who have outbraved Heaven by their impiety, or horribly abused mankind by their injustice!

iv. 17. 3 Yea, we may take notice, that even few of those men, whose actions have been illustrious for greatness void of goodness; who have climbed to height of power and state by the ruins and slaughters of mankind; that, I say, few of such persons have departed off the stage in peace or honour: that Alexander was snapt in the flower of his age and glory; that Cæsar was no sooner arrived to the top of his fortune, than to the bottom of his life; neither having time allowed them to enjoy, scarce to taste those fruits which they so eagerly sought and toiled for; both perhaps (one without any peradventure) being speeded away by violent

and treacherous hands: not to mention Pompey SERM. IX. or Hannibal, or other such like men of exorbitant ambition, whose fortunes were so strangely changed, and whose ends were so dismal.

4 We may however observe, that few great tyrants and oppressors, few persons insolently profane or sacrilegious, have escaped the visible stroke of Divine vengeance; a stroke inflicted in ways not only violent, but shameful; and that usually by means most unexpected, by the hands of their own guards, their own servants, their own favourites, the very instruments of their mischief, and these stirred up by slight causes, by some little disgrace or disgust received by them from their master<sup>x</sup>. What a long black legend of Caligulas, Neros, Domitians, Commoduses, Heliogabaluses, Maximinus<sup>y</sup>, may any man's observation even out of profane histories easily compose, of whom the Divine justice in such ways hath rid the world! Ps. lxxiii. 17, 18.

5 I might also mention the judgments of God upon persons and families raised to wealth and splendour of estate by oppression, fraud, sacrilege, rapine, or such bad means; whose estates without any visible ordinary means do moulder and decay; a secret moth devouring them; a thing which falls under common observation.

6 The same providence hath more clearly discovered itself in the strange detections of murders, and other enormous mischiefs committed in darkness, and revealed by a light unaccountably darted from heaven: of which kind not only books, but

<sup>x</sup> Alexand. Phœæus, ab uxore occisus.—Vid. Plut. in Pelopida, ad fin. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 398. Ed. Reisk.]

<sup>y</sup> Of such as Sejanus, Ruffinus, Eutropius, &c. Stilicho, &c.

**SERM.** common experience doth furnish with stories and  
**IX.** instances very remarkable both for number and weight.

7 The like strange discoveries of plots, contrived secretly against the public peace, and against the lives of princes, frequently offer themselves in story, and the like experience suggests concerning  
**Eccl. x. 20.** private men; a bird of the air carrying the voice of the wicked traitor to the ears of him who is  
**Hab. ii. 11.** designed against; the stones of the wall crying out treason and murder. Yea, generally, according to the Psalmist's observation, when men have encouraged themselves in an evil matter, and have  
**Ps. lxiiv.** communed about laying snares privily, saying,  
**5, 7;** who shall see them? God doth shoot at them with an arrow, suddenly they are wounded: so that all men have reason, as he adds they will do,  
**ver. 9.** to fear, and to declare the work of God, if they wisely consider his doing: and himself had reason  
**Ps. ix. 16.** to pronounce in another place; *The Lord is known by the judgment that he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.*

8 I might adjoin the remarkable providences which also occur, concerning the recompenses and encouragements of virtue<sup>2</sup>; in the protecting good men from imminent dangers, delivering them from grievous straits, supplying them in extreme needs, prospering them in their undertakings, raising them (as Joseph, David, Daniel, &c.) by wonderful means to wealth and dignity, for their own encouragement, or for public benefit; concerning which occurrences the Psalmist had reason to say, *Whoso*  
**Ps. cvii.**  
**43.**

<sup>2</sup> *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken.*—**Ps. xxxvii. 25.**

*is wise will observe these things, and they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.* SERM.  
IX.

These considerations, with divers others of the same kind, grounded on Providence, I must confess have not, singly taken, the greatest force and evidence to infer our purpose, nor can they with the same assurance and peremptoriness be urged to every adversary or disbeliever, as some other arguments may; those, which we have formerly insisted on, drawn from nature. For in nature, all causes there being themselves destitute of immediate reason or choice<sup>a</sup>, and subject to no chance or contingency, (properly so called,) we may, indeed, confidently ascribe all effects, in which any reason or counsel doth appear, whether ordinary or extraordinary, to Divine efficacy<sup>b</sup>; there being no other cause, to which we can reasonably impute them: but in human affairs, seeing man is an understanding and free agent, and few effects happen without some act of his intervening, there can hardly occur any passage, how rare and strange soever, which our incredulous adversaries, with some kind of colour or plausible shift, will not be ready to attribute unto some reach of man's wit, or to some capricio of his humour, or to some unaccountable casualty, incident to matters of this kind; (as we see the Philistines were apt to impute the plague of emerods to chance; the Israelites did presently charge that terrible judgment on Corah and his complices upon Moses and Aaron). And commonly Divine and human influences upon these

<sup>a</sup> Vid. Claud. in Ruffin. lib. 1. init. *elegantè hac de re disserentem.*

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Sen. de Provid. init.

SERM.  
IX.

effects (even as in nature the influences of Heaven and of inferior particular causes) are so complicated and interwoven together, that it is not so easy to distinguish the one from the other, either in whole or in part, to separate the bounds of Providence ordinary and extraordinary, to discern what God performs by usual instruments, what by his immediate hand. As also the actions of the wisest men are often grounded upon reasons remote from, and impenetrable by vulgar conceit; so are the reasons of God's proceedings with men various and often mysterious; above the reach of our capacity with distinction to apprehend them: as who, for instance, can oftentimes readily distinguish between God's merciful patience toward bad men, and his gracious recompensing the good; between God's just vengeance on the one sort, and his fatherly correction of the other; between his reclaiming one from vice, either, as particular circumstances require, by adverse or prosperous events, and his trying or exercising the other's virtue by the like proceedings? Who can distinguish between what is performed or permitted upon general or upon particular accounts; in respect to the public, or in regard to private men; in relation to present times, or to posterity; upon absolute and immediate accounts, or in order to some further, more remote designs? Who, I say, can pretend skill enough to define what or how much is best to be done in these cases; when it is fit to allow men to proceed in the use of their freedom, when to interrupt them? Who, but he that exactly knows the limits of just and fit, the qualities and tempers of men, the state and circumstances of every thing?

I add, that God's governance of things hath SERM. IX.  
no complete issue here; that this is not the only  
nor the chief place of dispensing rewards and  
punishments; that things are but doing here, and  
not done; in a progress and tendency toward some-  
what beyond, not in a state of final resolution or  
perfection: wherefore as we cannot fully judge of  
an artificial work by its first draughts, nor of a  
poem by some scenes, but must stay till all is  
finished and acted through; so we cannot so clearly  
discern the entire wisdom and justice of Divine  
dispensations here; not till that day, when, as  
St Paul tells us, God's *δικαιοκρασία*, *His righteous* Rom. ii. 5.  
*judgment shall be made. apparent.* Whence dis-  
course grounded upon present events may not  
prove so convincing or satisfactory, except unto the  
children of wisdom, who by a sharper sense can Ps. x. 5;  
discover even the smaller lines and more occult  
tracts of God's hand; who with an especial attention  
and sagacity do, as the Prophet expresseth it,  
regard the works of the Lord, and consider the xxviii. 5.  
operations of his hands. However, the frequent Isai. v. 12.  
occurrences in human affairs of passages, such as  
we mentioned, so rare and remarkable, if they do  
not, singly and solitarily taken, thoroughly serve  
to demonstrate the hypothesis of Divine providence,  
yet at least they do much favour and strengthen it,  
being very congruous thereto. Supposing such a  
Providence, it is most probable (I may say neces-  
sary) that such events would happen; whence there  
can be no absurdity in ascribing them thereto, but  
much of reason in doing it. They are *Digni vindice*  
*nodi*°, difficulties not otherwise easily resolved, and

° [Hor. Ep. ad Pis. 191.]



SERM.  
IX.

Ps. cvii.  
43;  
lxiv. 5, 7;

xcii. 6.

therefore God may be most fitly introduced, as the most probable cause of them ; if strict discourse cannot compel us, yet ingenuity will incline us, and wisdom will oblige us, to do so : *They that are wise will consider these things, and they shall understand the lovingkindness* (I add, and also both the wisdom and power) *of the Lord : A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this,* saith the Psalmist, concerning the proceedings of providence.

But however general providence doth work in convincing some, particular providence will at least produce that effect in many : for I dare appeal to most men (to those especially, who have ever had any fear of God, or sense of goodness in them,) if, sometime or other, in their lives, they have not in their pressing needs and straits (especially upon their addresses to God for help) found help and comfort conveyed unto them by an insensible hand ; if they have not sometimes in a manner unaccountable escaped imminent dangers ; if they have not in the performance of their duty and devotion toward God experienced a comfort more than ordinary ; if they cannot to some events of their life aptly apply those observations of the Psalmist : *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of his troubles : The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them : O taste and see that the Lord is good. O taste and see ;* he appeals to experience ; he supposes the Divine goodness may be seen and felt ; that surely will be a most efficacious argument of God's existence and providence. And so it is, indeed, to all good men, for whose comfort and

Ps. xxxiv.  
6, 7, 8;  
cxlv. 18,  
19.

1 John v.  
10.

confirmation it is chiefly mentioned, though it is SERM.  
IX.  
not likely to have much influence upon them who  
have alienated themselves from God, and driven  
him out of their thoughts; except they should Ps. x. 4.  
(beyond what can be expected from them) be so  
civil and candid, as to believe the testimony of  
others, who assert this great truth unto them from  
their own inward conscience and experience.

But let thus much serve, at present, for the  
shewing that God doth, as our Lord tells us,  
hitherto work; and consequently that, as we thence  
meant to infer, God doth exist.

The Father.

SERMON X\*.

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER.

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EPH. IV. 6.

*One God and Father of all.*

SERM.  
X.

[I HAVE formerly discoursed concerning the nature of that belief which we here profess: I did also endeavour by several arguments to evince the truth and credibility of the first article of our Creed, which is, indeed, the foundation of all the rest, and of all Religion, that there is one God. I proceed to the following parts:—

The Father.

The appellation of God not improperly taken, (as when it is attributed to creatures, upon some resemblance in nature or office which they bear to the supreme God,) but relating to him who only, truly, and properly is styled God, is sometimes put absolutely, sometime hath a relative apposition going along with it. Being absolutely or singly put, it sometimes refers, by way of eminency, particularly to the first Person in the

\* [Of the introductory portion of this sermon, comprised within brackets, the first and last paragraphs are most probably additions by Tillotson; the remainder has been supplied from Barrow's Shorter Exposition of the Creed.]

blessed and glorious Trinity; as when Christ is called the Son of God, and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God; when God is put in distinction from the other Persons: when, for instance, it is said, *That they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent: Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: The Word was with God: To serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven:* and in that form of blessing, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all:* but commonly it is to be understood for God essentially considered, (according to the Divine essence common to all three Persons,) to whom in that respect all the Divine attributes agree, and from whom all Divine operations (*absolute et ad extra*) do jointly proceed. And to this sense or notion we have hitherto supposed that the name of God might be here applied. For, that there is one God, having such essential attributes, is the first principle and foundation of all Religion, which we must therefore suppose, if not directly expressed, yet at least sufficiently implied in the Creed.

And supposing the word in part doth imply this sense, the attribute or title of Father doth upon many accounts truly and properly belong to God, (God absolute and essential,) in relation to all things generally, and to some things particularly; especially, which is the most fruitful consideration, in respect to ourselves.

Let us first consider the accounts upon which, then the terms (or objects) in relation to which

SERM. God is so called; then let us apply the considera-  
 X. tion to practice.

*One God and Father of all.]*

Every attribute, every title, every relation of God doth ground an obligation, doth afford an inducement to good practice; but none other doth ground higher obligation, or yieldeth stronger inducement to all kinds of obedience, than doth this of Father, which here, and frequently other-where in Holy Scripture, is ascribed to God: unto which purpose, of exciting us to good practice, (to all good practice generally, and particularly to some kinds thereof,) I do now intend to apply the consideration thereof: but first let us consider in what respects, or upon what grounds, this title is attributed to God; then let us reflect somewhat upon the term, in respect to which God is styled Father of all, that is, in a larger sense of all things, in a stricter sense of all persons, in the most restrained sense of all us Christians.

The title of Father is upon several accounts commonly given to things; one is causality; for the efficient cause, or author of anything, is called its father; any work is said to be the child, or offspring of him that maketh or inventeth it; *Hath the rain a father*, (or, *Who is father of the rain?* (as the LXX. render it,) or *who hath begotten the drops of the dew?* saith God in Job: another ground thereof is sustenance, or preservation; so *xxix. 16;* Job saith of himself, that he was a father to the *xxxi. 18.* poor and fatherless, because he yielded them protection and relief; so, *Roma patrem patriæ Cicero-nem libera dixit*, Rome called Cicero father,

because he preserved it from the attempts of wicked conspirators against its liberty and safety: education also and instruction entitle to this name; whence St Paul calleth Timothy and Philemon, the Corinthians and Galatians, whom he had instructed in the Christian faith, his children: lastly, governance, attended with beneficent affection and care, doth found this appellation; whence princes are usually styled the fathers of their country, being supposed to desire and to provide for the public good; so we have the fathers of tribes, that is, the principal persons of them, who did preside over them: I do omit antiquity and age, for which we know that persons are vulgarly called fathers.

Upon all these accounts it is plain, that the title of Universal Father may truly be ascribed unto God; especially in respect to ourselves, who may be considered as equivalent to all other objects, as comprehending in us somewhat common to them all: God in some of those respects is the Father of all things, or of us as beings; God is more especially the Father of intelligent beings, and of us as such; God is the Father of all men, of all good men, and peculiarly of Christians; which respects all of them do or should concur in us. Let us survey those particulars somewhat distinctly, then apply them as obligations and inducements to good practice.

1 God is the Father of all things, or of us as creatures; as the efficient cause and creator of them all: *He made the world*, as St Paul telleth the Athenians, *and all things therein; He commanded*, saith the Psalmist, *and they were created*;

SERM.  
X.

1 Tim. i. 2.

Philem.

10.

1 Cor. iv.

15.

Gal. iv. 19.

Josh. xix.

51;

xxi. 1.

Acts xvii.

24;

xiv. 15.

Ps. cxlv.

15;

cxlvi. 6;

lxxxix. 11;

xxxiii. 6.

SERM. X. *The world and the fulness thereof, (that is, all*

*wherewith it is replenished, and which it contains,) he hath founded them; All these things, saith God*  
 Isai. lxvi. 2; xl. 26. *in the Prophet, hath mine hand made: and*  
*Ποιητὴν καὶ Πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ παντός, The Maker and*  
*Father of this universe, even Plato<sup>a</sup> styleth God.*  
 God is also the Father of all things, because he  
 Heb. i. 3. *preserveth and sustaineth them by his power; He,*  
*saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, beareth up all*  
 Ps. cxlviii. 6; *things by the word of his power; He, saith the*  
*Psalmist, hath established them for ever and ever;*  
*he made a decree which shall not pass, by virtue of*  
 civ. 27, 28; *which they subsist: also because he by a continual*  
 cxlv. 15. *care doth provide for them: They all, saith the*  
*Psalmist, wait upon him, that he may give them*  
*their meat in due season; what he giveth them, they*  
*gather; he openeth his hand, they are filled with*  
*good: he also governeth, and containeth them in*  
 Isai. xl. 26. *good order; for, His kingdom ruleth over all; and,*  
 Ps. cxv. 3; *Whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, that doeth he in*  
 ciii. 19; *heaven and earth: all this he doeth with goodness*  
 cxxxv. 6; *and affection, for, His tender mercies are over all*  
 cxlvii. 15; *his works: whence even among Pagans<sup>b</sup> the word*  
 cxlv. 9. *Pater absolutely put, did signify the Supreme*  
*God, they understanding thereby the Author,*  
*Preserver, and Governor of all things; and Pater*  
*omnipotens is the periphrasis, whereby the wisest*  
*poet doth usually express God.*

2 More especially God is the Father of intel-  
 Heb. xii. 9. *lectual beings; he is styled The Father of spirits:*

<sup>a</sup> Tim. [28 c.]

<sup>b</sup> O Pater, et Rex Jupiter.—Hor. Sat. II. I. [43.]

Pater ipso colendi

Haud facilem esse viam voluit.—Virg. Georg. I. 121.

<sup>γ</sup> Ὁ πατήρ ἡμέτερος, Κρονίδης, ὕψατος κρείστων.—Hom. II. VIII. 31.

particularly the angels in way of excellency are SERM. X. called the sons of God: *There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord*: and, *When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy*; in which place of Job the LXX. have ἄγγελοί μου, *my angels*; (although perhaps there all God's creatures may be understood rejoicing and exulting, as it were, in their being newly by the goodness of their Maker conferred on them :) again, *Who, saith the Psalmist, in heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? the sons of the mighty*; it is in the Hebrew<sup>c</sup>, *the sons of God*, and so the LXX. render it; and what precedeth, *who in heaven, doth make it*, as it seems, best interpretable of the angels. Of such beings God is more especially the Father, because he did produce them in a more excellent manner; for other things he made as it were by his hand, these he breathed out of his mouth; as it is said of Adam, when God infused his soul into his body, that *God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*; because they more nearly resemble God in their nature and properties, (in spirituality, and independence upon matter; in life, and self-moving; in immortality, and perpetuity of being; in understanding, and wisdom; in will, and goodness; or in a capacity at least of such perfections;) because also he ruleth them in a nobler way; a way, not of blind and constrained obedience, but of wise and free choice, according to laws of justice, by obligations of ingenuity; because he likewise beareth a

Num. xvi. 22.  
Job i. 6;  
xxxviii. 7.

Ps. lxxxix. 6;  
xxxix. 1.

Gen. ii. 7.

<sup>c</sup> [בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים]



SERM.  
X.Ps. ciii.  
20.

more dear affection unto them, and a peculiar care over them: in respect to these beings, indeed, the relation of father is more proper, because they only can be sensible thereof, and capable to render the duties of piety, gratitude, and willing obedience suitable thereto; *Rational beings*, saith an Ethnic Philosopher, *are the sons of God, because they only are naturally fit to converse with God, being conjoined to him by participation of reason*<sup>d</sup>: and thus, indeed, even the Pagan Theologers, commonly from primitive general tradition we may suppose, did conceive the Supreme God to be the Father of the gods, (intending not such gods as were of man's devising, creatures deified by the flattery or fondness of the vulgar, but of higher rank, answering to our angels, whom they supposed as to approach in excellency of nature nearest to God, so to have derived their being from him, and to attend constantly upon him, partaking of his glory, and observing his pleasure;) whence *Divūm Pater, Father of the gods*, is a common periphrasis, or title of God among them; and particularly in the *Timæus* of Plato there is an oration which he representeth God making unto those creatures presently upon their creation, beginning thus; *O ye chief gods, of whom I am the Framers and Father*<sup>e</sup>; concerning which gods that which he can say, he pretendeth to deduce from ancient original tradition. But to come nearer to our more particular concernment.

<sup>d</sup> ὅτι κοινωνεῖν μόνον ταῦτα πέφυκε τῷ Θεῷ τῆς συναστροφῆς, κατὰ τὸν λόγον ἐπιτελεγμένα.—Epict. Diss. 1. 9. [5.]

<sup>e</sup> Θεοὶ θεῶν, ὧν ἐγὼ δημιουργὸς πατὴρ τε ἔργων ἂ δέ' ἐμοῦ γεγόμενα ἅλута ἐμοῦ γ' ἐτέλοντος.—Tim. [41 A.]

3 God is the Father, in a more especial manner, of mankind: *Have we not*, saith the Prophet, *one Father? hath not one God created us?* and Adam is called *The son of God*, the genealogy of all men terminating in him; and, *We are all God's offspring*, saith St Paul: we are so, for that *His hands made and fashioned our bodies*; and for that *He formed our spirit within us*, as the Prophet speaketh. He made us after his own image, so as signally to represent and resemble himself, in properties of nature, and in eminence of condition; in this great family of visible creatures he hath assigned unto us the principal station, so that other creatures there are but as servants waiting on us; we are as children, depending only on him; he hath shewed an especial tenderness of affection and good-will toward us, in providing for us all manner of needful sustenance and comfortable accommodation; continually watching over us for our good, and holding us up, as the Psalmist speaketh, from our mother's womb; bestowing on us good education, (instructing us by the light of nature, or dictates of natural reason and conscience, by civil conversation, by the precepts of wise men, and examples of virtuous persons, by providential encouragements to good, and determents from evil; together with the secret whispers, advices, and motions of his grace;) bearing with excessive patience our infirmities, miscarriages, and offences; using seasonable and moderate chastisements to reclaim us from bad courses to those which our duty and our advantage do require: in short, all God's dealings and demeanour toward mankind do argue in him a paternal regard thereto: whence

SERM.  
X.  
Mal. ii. 10.  
Luke iii.  
38.  
Acts xvii.  
28, 29.  
Job x. 8.  
Ps. cxxxix.  
15, 16.  
Zech. xii.  
1.  
Ps. xxxiii.  
15.  
Gen. i. 27.

Ps. lxxi. 6.

SERM.  
X

even the blind Heathens discerned and acknowledged this general relation of God to men; and, *Gentis humanæ Pater, atque custos*<sup>f</sup>, (*O Father, and keeper of mankind!*) was an invocation suitable to their notion concerning him: from him they deduced our original<sup>g</sup>; to him they ascribed the formation of our bodies, so full of wonderful artifice; from him they affirm our souls to be extracted; from his goodness and care they supposed all the conveniences of life which we enjoy to be derived; they conceived him to bear a kind affection unto man, and to have a constant care over him<sup>h</sup>; as by many express testimonies might be shewed, and from their practices evidently may be inferred.

1 Pet. i.  
23.

Matt. v.  
44, 45.

4 Further, yet more especially God is the Father of all good men<sup>i</sup>; such a relation being yet built upon higher grounds and respects; for as good they have another original from him; virtue springeth in their hearts from a heavenly seed; that emendation and perfection of nature is produced by his grace enlightening and quickening them: they are images of him, resembling him in judgment and disposition of mind, in will and purpose, in action and behaviour; the which resemblances do argue them to be the sons of God, and, indeed, do constitute them such: for, *Love*

<sup>f</sup> Hor. Carm. i. 12. [49.] Vid. Epict. Diss. i. 3. [The passage is given at length, p. 310 of this volume.]

<sup>g</sup> Omnes si ad primam originem revocentur, a diis sunt.—Sen. Ep. XLIV. [1.]

Divinitas, unde omnes animos haustos, aut acceptos, aut libatos haberemus.—Cic. de Div. [II. 11, 26.]

<sup>h</sup> Carior est illis homo, quam sibi.—[Juv. Sat. x. 350.]

<sup>i</sup> Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est.—Sen. Epist. XLV. [2.]

*your enemies, saith our Lord, bless those that curse* SERM. X.  
*you, do good to those that hate you—that you may*  
*be the sons of your Father in heaven; and, Love* Luke vi. 35.  
*your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting*  
*nothing thence; and your reward shall be great,*  
*and ye shall be the sons of the Most High.* Imita-  
tion of God in goodness and beneficence doth, we  
see, found a filial relation unto God: to such God  
answerably doth bear a paternal kindness and  
compassion; for, *Like as a father pitieth his chil-* Ps. ciii. 13.  
*dren, so, saith the Psalmist, the Lord pitieth them*  
*that fear him.* He in all respects dealeth with  
them as with his children; *ὡς υἱοὶς προσφέρεται, as* Heb. xii. 7.  
the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh: he teacheth  
and guideth them with wholesome advice upon all  
occasions; for, *What man is he that feareth the* Ps. xxv. 12;  
*Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall*  
*choose; and, The steps of a good man are ordered* xxxvii. 23.  
*by the Lord: he gently reproveth and correcteth*  
*them; Whom, saith the Wise Man, God loveth he* Prov. iii. 12.  
*correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he*  
*delighteth: he maintaineth them with all needful*  
*sustenance and accommodation without their care*  
*or trouble; for, Take no care, saith our Saviour,* Matt. vi. 31;  
*saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we* vii. 11.  
*drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?—for*  
*your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of*  
*all these things; he so knoweth and considereth*  
*it, as to provide, that There shall not be, as the* Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10;  
*Psalmist affirmeth, any want unto them that fear* xxxvii. 11;  
*him: he protecteth them from all danger, sup-*  
*porteth them in all distress, and rescueth them*  
*from all mischief; for, His eyes are open upon the* xxxiii. 18,  
*righteous—to deliver his soul from death, and to* 19.

SERM. X. *keep him alive in famine; he keepeth all his bones,*

Ps. xxxiv.  
20;

xxxvii. 24;  
xxxiv. 19.

*so that none of them is broken—though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand; many are his afflictions, but the Lord delivereth him out of all. Such paternal affections doth God bear, such paternal acts doth he exercise, toward good men; the which even Pagan wise men did apprehend; of whom one thus expresseth himself; God, saith he, hath a fatherly mind toward good men, and strongly loveth them....Between them and God there is a friendship which virtue doth conciliate; a friendship, do I say? yea, a kindred and similitude; for that a good man is God's disciple and imitator, and his true offspring, whom that magnificent Father, no softly exactor of virtue, doth, after the manner of severe parents, educate hardly\*.*

5 We may further observe, that God in his proceedings with men, whereby he particularly designeth to contain them within bounds of duty, and thereby to lead them unto happiness, delighteth to represent himself under this obliging and endearing relation: thus he did in regard to his ancient people upon all occasions express himself;

Rom. ix. 4. *Who are Israelites, whose is the adoption, saith St Paul, reckoning this as the first of those privileges which appertain to the Jews: it was the commission to Moses; Thou shalt say unto*

Exod. iv.  
22, 23.

\* [Patrium habet Deus adversus bonos viros animus, et illos fortiter amat.... Inter bonos viros ac Deum amicitia est, conciliante virtute. Amicitiam dico? immo etiam necessitudo et similitudo: quoniam quidem bonus ipse tempore tantum a Deo differt, discipulus ejus, æmulatorque, et vera progenies: quem parens ille magnificus, virtutum non lenis exactor, sicut severi patres, durius educat.] Sen. de Prov. cap. ii. 4. Vid. cap. i. 5.

*Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn; and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: Moses also, foreseeing how that people would misbehave themselves, doth thus in God's name expostulate with them; Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy Father that bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee? Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee: David also thus addresseth himself to God in their behalf: Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever; thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: and, Doubtless, saith Isaiah, thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting: and, I am, saith God in Jeremiah, a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn; Is Ephraim my dear son, is he a pleasant child? (He is, the LXX. render it, in way of assertion, not of interrogation.)*

6 But in the Christian dispensation God more signally representeth himself in this quality and notion. God herein treateth us, not so much as our Lord and Master, with imperious rigour and awfulness, as our Father, with most gracious condescension, and allurements of kindness: our Lord (the only Son of God in a sense infinitely most peculiar and high) was not, saith the Apostle, ashamed to call us brethren; Go, said our Lord, for instance of that gracious condescension, to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father; both my God, and

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Deut.  
xxxii. 6,  
18.

1 Chron.  
xxix. 10,  
11.

Isai. lxiii.  
16;  
xliv. 2, 24;  
xlv. 3.

Jer. xxxi.  
9, 20.

Heb. ii. 11.

John xx.  
17.

**SERM.** *your God*: and such are the advantages peculiar  
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to Christians, grounding this relation toward them, that St Paul, comparing our state in regard to Gal. iv. 7; God with that of the Jews, doth thus infer; *So that thou* (O Christian) *art not now a servant, but a son*: so it is asserted, and accordingly (which is worth our while distinctly to observe) all the performances of God toward us, and in our behalf, are of such a nature, and are set out in such terms, as do ground and import this relation: for,

1 The reception of a believer into the participation of the privileges and advantages which Christianity tendereth, is termed *υιοθεσία*, the making him a son; the adopting him into God's family, the conferring upon him the title and quality of God's child; together with the internal disposition of mind, and the liberty of access and intercourse, which do suit that relation: *Whosoever*, saith St John, *did receive him, to them he gave the power* (or *privilege*) *to become the sons of God, even to* Gal. iii. 26. *them who believed in his name*: and, *Ye are all*, saith St Paul, *the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus*; that is, by sincerely embracing Christianity: and, *Behold*, saith St John again, *what manner of love the Father hath given us, that we should be called the sons of God*: and, *Ye have not received the spirit of servitude unto fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, by which we cry, Abba, Father*; that is, by which in our prayers with humble affection we freely, confidently, and readily, according to our Saviour's institution, do say, *Our Father*.

2 That renovation of our nature, and qualifying our minds, as the Gospel prescribeth and requirerth,

is called regeneration, a new creation, a new birth, SERM. X.  
the begetting a new man within us: *If a man be* John iii. 3.  
*not born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of*  
*God; that is, he cannot be a good Christian:*  
*Whoever is begot of God doth not sin; that is,* 1 John iii. 9.  
good Christians do not live in a course of dis-  
obedience: *We are αὐτοῦ ποίημα, God's work,* OR Eph. ii. 10;  
*production, being created in Christ Jesus to good*  
*works: Ye have been taught—to put on the new* iv. 21, 24.  
*man, that is created according to the image of* Col. iii. 10.  
*God in righteousness and true holiness.* In such  
terms is the effect of the Christian dispensation  
upon our hearts and lives described: and that with  
the greatest reason; for no act of God toward us  
can be more fatherly, than working in us by his  
grace the principles of Christian life, and the  
practices springing from it; nothing doth nearer  
advance us to a similitude with God, and a par- 2 Pet. i. 4.  
ticipation of the Divine nature; nothing doth  
conciliate from God a more tender affection to us,  
or worketh in us a more dutiful affection toward  
him, answerable to this relation, than doth a hearty  
compliance with the grace of the Gospel.

3 The resurrection of good Christians after  
death to a better state of life, their entering into  
immortal bliss and glory, is worthily styled *παλιγγε-  
νεσία*, a being generated and born again; whereby  
they receive from God another more excellent life  
and state of being, more like and conformable to  
God: for, *We know, saith St John, that if he shall* 1 John iii.  
*appear, (or, that when he shall appear, as some* <sup>2.</sup>  
*copies read it,) we shall be like him; and, As, saith* 1 Cor. xv.  
*St Paul, we have borne the image of the earthly* <sup>49.</sup>  
*(Adam,) we shall also bear the image of the*



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2 Cor. iii. 18. *heavenly: We shall, saith he, be metamorphosed, or transfigured, into the same image: and, They, saith our Saviour, which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead—are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection: that state of bliss is therefore styled a portion or inheritance, allotted to sons, and consequent upon such a relation: If sons, saith St Paul, then heirs; heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ, receiving the reward and promise of an eternal inheritance: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, saith St Peter, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.*

4 I might adjoin, that Christian men do become the sons of God by the intervention of our Saviour, assuming our nature, and conforming himself to the likeness of men; whereby he becomes *The firstborn of many brethren: God, saith St Paul, sent forth his son, born of a woman, that we might receive the privilege of being made sons: and, Children, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, partake of flesh and blood; whence (as he meaneth to infer) our Lord being the Son of God, we upon conjunction of nature with him, and as his brethren, become also such: he further intimateth, that upon this score we do surpass angels themselves; for that He took not on him the nature of angels, but took on him the seed of Abraham; they were not, as we, dignified with a fraternal relation to the Son of God.*

Phil. ii. 7.  
Rom. viii.  
3, 29.  
Gal. iv. 4,  
5.  
Heb. ii.  
11, 14;

ii. 16.

In so many several respects is God our Father; we are his children, as being his creatures, made, preserved, and maintained by him; as we are intellectual creatures, being placed in degree and quality of nature so near him; as we by virtue and goodness (produced in us by his grace) do anywise approach him, resemble him, and partake of his special favour; as we are Christians, adopted into his heavenly family, renewed by his holy grace, and destined to a participation of his eternal glory.

Now the consideration of these grounds, (each one of them, and all of them together,) upon which this relation of God unto us is founded, hath manifold good uses; it is apt to inform and admonish us concerning many necessary duties resulting from it; and to enforce upon us the practice of them.

1 It in general may teach, and should mind us, what reverence, honour, and observance is due from us unto God, in equity and justice, according to ingenuity and gratitude: *If, saith God in the Prophet, I be a Father, where is my honour?* Our believing and acknowledging this relation is vain, if we do not yield the respects, and perform the duties answerable thereto. And if, indeed, we are obliged to love, to respect, to observe those, who have been the instruments of God in producing, in nourishing, in breeding us, how much more are we bound to yield the same to him, who principally did, who continually doth bestow upon us our being, together with all the supports, the conveniences, the comforts thereof; from whose free bounty we derive not only the benefits of this transitory life, but the inestimable privileges and

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Deut.  
xxxii. 6,  
18.

blessings relating to the future incomparably better state? If we neglect our duty so grounded, may not God justly expostulate with us, as he did of old with those children of his: *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise: Is he not thy Father, who bought thee?* (or rather, *who got thee*, *ὃς ἐκτίσασαί σε*, saith the Greek; and both that and the Hebrew do agree in expression of that thing with our common manner of speech;) *hath not he made thee, and established thee?* It is, as is there intimated, a part of extreme folly, no less than of injustice and ingratitude, to disregard and disobey him, to whom by such bands of duty and obligation we are allied: indeed, the excellency of God's nature doth justly require honour and reverence to him; his sovereign power may also reasonably extort obedience from us; but his paternal benevolence and beneficence are the most obliging grounds, the most kindly inducements, to the practice of all piety toward him: we are foolishly unworthy in not being good on the other accounts; in not being so for these reasons we are monstrously base.

John viii.  
39. 44.

2 This consideration may instruct and admonish us what we should be, and how we should behave ourselves; for that, if we be God's children, it becometh us, and we are obliged, in our disposition and demeanour, to resemble, to imitate him: it is natural and proper for children to resemble their parents in their complexion and countenance; to imitate them in their actions and carriage: *If ye, argueth our Lord, were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham; ye would imitate him in readily believing and obeying God: and,*

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*Ye, saith he again, are of your father the Devil, because ye perform the lusts of your father; because in his envious, treacherous, murderous disposition and practice, ye resemble him: so if we be God's children, we must, according to St Paul's exhortation, imitate God, As dear children; we must, Eph. v. 1. in all imitable perfections, strive to be like him; so doth the Scripture frequently (both in general, and as to particular cases or matters) apply and inculcate this point: God is holy and pure, so therefore ought we to be; As obedient children, 1 Pet. i. saith St Peter, not fashioning yourselves according 14, 15. to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; and, That, saith St Paul, Phil. ii. ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God 15. without rebuke, (or, irreprehensible sons of God,) in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation; and, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, saith St John, 1 John iii. subjoining—and every one that hath this hope, (a 2, 3; hope grounded upon, or springing from such a relation) purifieth himself, as God is pure: God is perfectly just and righteous, thence we likewise should labour to be such; for, Every one, saith iii. 7. St John, that doeth righteousness is righteous, as Matt. v. 48; he is righteous: God is perfect in all goodness; so must we endeavour to be, as our Saviour enjoineth us; Be ye, saith he, therefore perfect, as your Father is perfect: God is bountiful, gracious, and merciful unto all; we thence should learn to be so also; I say unto you, (they are our Saviour's v. 44, 45. lessons to us,) Love your enemies, bless those that curse you, do good to those that hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use you, and*

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Luke vi.  
35, 36.

*persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust: and again; Love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil; be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.* So are we admonished by the holy writers of our engagements to be good on this account. And reason, indeed, sheweth this relation to be inconsistent with our being otherwise; for similitude only can preserve cognation<sup>1</sup>; things very unlike become formally different in kind and nature thereby; diversity of manners signifieth a difference in blood: if therefore we be closely affixed to material things, or pronely addicted to brutish pleasures, how can we be the children of him, that is purely spiritual, altogether intellectual? If we be fierce, hardhearted, unmerciful, or uncharitable, how can we claim kindred with him, who is all love and benignity, all munificence and mercy? there can be no affinity in relation, where there is such a dissimilitude in nature: God also cannot deal with us as children, cannot affect or like us, if we do not resemble him; he can only love good men, and the most certain κριτήριον (the most perfect rule, the most evident mark) by which we can discern or distinguish what goodness is, is conformity to God's nature, discovered by his actions; for that cannot otherwise than be very

<sup>1</sup> Τὸ ὅμοιον τῷ ὁμοίῳ φύσει συγγενὲς ἐστίν.—Plat. Protag. [337 D.]

good, wise and reasonable, comely and commendable, convenient and beneficial to us, wherein we resemble God; God's example cannot misguide us, his law and his practice ever consent, his will and nature cannot disagree; nothing therefore can more please him than what is like him; as even Plato could observe: *What practice, saith he, is acceptable and suitable to God? One; even that, which the old saying implies, Like is ever a friend to like*<sup>m</sup>. Nothing likewise is more certainly bad, or more displeasing to God, than that which rendereth us in our complexion of mind, or in our behaviour, unlike to God: we by being such, or doing so, must necessarily fall from this high dignity, must *ipso facto* forfeit this excellent privilege of being thus related to God; we thereby become exiles and aliens from his name and family; we prove rebels and foes, instead of sons and friends unto him.

3 This consideration may raise us to a just regard, esteem, and valuation of ourselves; may consequently inspire noble thoughts, and breed generous inclinations in us; may withdraw us from mean, base, and unworthy designs or practices; may excite and encourage us to handsome, brave, worthy resolutions and undertakings, suitable to the dignity of our nature, the nobleness of our descent, the eminency of so high a relation, of so near an alliance to God: even natural light dictateth this use of the notion, and heathen philosophers do apply it: *If any one*, saith Epictetus,

<sup>m</sup> Τίς οὖν δὴ πράξις φίλη καὶ ἀκολουθὸς Θεῷ; μία, καὶ ἓνα λόγον ἔχουσα ἀρχαῖον, ὅτι τῷ μὲν ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον ὄντι μετρίῳ φίλον ἂν εἴη.—  
Plato de Leg. iv. [716 c.]

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*could be affected with this opinion, that we are all originally descended from God, and that God is both the Father of men and gods, he would not, I suppose, conceive anything ignoble or mean concerning himself; If Cæsar should adopt thee, none could endure thy superciliousness; and if thou knowest that thou art God's son, shall it not elevate thy mind<sup>a</sup>? So that great Philosopher discourseth. And St Austin relateth this discourse of Varro, the most learned Roman of his time: It is, said he, useful for cities, that valiant men should (although it be false) believe themselves born of the gods, that their minds thence bearing a confidence of their Divine extraction, may more boldly undertake great enterprises, pursue them more earnestly, and hence accomplish them more happily, from the security this conceit produceth<sup>o</sup>. Shall we then, who in so many respects are so highly born, and of so illustrious an extraction, (we that are allied to God by our intelligent nature, that are by the heavenly seed of Christian regeneration more deeply implanted into his stock,) so far debase ourselves, as to affect and pursue trivial, abject, dishonourable things? Are we not ashamed of so vile a degeneracy? Can we dare so to disparage our high*

<sup>a</sup> Epict. Diss. I. 3. [Εἰ τις τῷ δόγματι τούτῳ συμπαθῆσαι κατ' ἕξιν δύναιτο, ὅτι γεγονάμεν ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ πάντες προηγουμένως, καὶ ὁ Θεὸς πατὴρ ἐστὶ τῶν τ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν θεῶν οἶμαι ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄγενές οὐδὲ ταπεινὸν ἐνθυμηθήσεται περὶ ἑαυτοῦ. ἀλλ' ἂν μὲν Καίσαρ εἰσποιησῇται σε, οὐδεὶς σου τὴν ὄψιν βαστάσει· ἂν δὲ γνῷς, ὅτι τοῦ Διὸς υἱὸς εἶ, οὐκ ἐπαρθήσῃ.]

<sup>o</sup> Aug. de Civ. D. III. 4. [Opp. Tom. VII. col. 61 x. Sed utile esse civitatibus dicit, ut se viri fortes, etiamsi falsum sit, diis genitos esse credant: ut eo modo animus humanus velut divinæ stirpis fiduciam gerens, res magnas aggrediendas præsumat audacius, agat vehementius, et ob hoc impleat ipsa securitate felicius.]

relations? God our heavenly Father; Christ our SERM. X. elder brother; the holy Angels and blessed Saints, — our kindred in nature, our brethren in grace? Shall we not be afraid for such unworthiness to be degraded, to be rejected, to be disinherited by our holy Father; who is jealous of his honour, who cannot brook to have his blood so stained and defiled, or that such blots and disgraces should stick to his lineage; that his image impressed on us should be so deformed and disfigured; that such disorders and misbehaviours should be committed in his family? If we do not behave ourselves as children, he hath declared that he will disavow and cast us off from being so; *Every plant*, our John xv. Saviour telleth us, *that beareth not good fruit, he<sup>2, 6.</sup> loppeth it from his stock, and casteth it away.*

4 This consideration is an especial motive to humility, apt to depress vain conceit and confidence in ourselves: for, if we are God's children, so as to have received our beings, all our powers and abilities, all our goods and wealth, both internal and external, both natural and spiritual, from his free disposal, so as to be continually preserved and maintained by his providence, to depend for all our subsistence upon his care and bounty; what reason can we have to assume or ascribe anything to ourselves? How vain is it to rely upon any strength or wisdom, any possession or endowment we have, or seem to have? How extremely fond are we, if we be raised in our conceit, or are ambitious of reputation, upon the score of any such things? for, *Who*, as the Apostle 1 Cor. iv. *invincibly discourseth, made thee to differ? what<sup>7.</sup> hast thou that thou didst not receive? and if thou*



**SERM.** *hast received it, why dost thou glory, as if thou*  
**X.** *hadst not received it?* To him alone, who is the  
 John iii. Author and Donor of all good things; to the  
 27. Fountain of all power, all joy, all blessings; to *The*  
 1 Chron. xxix. 14, *Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect*  
 15. *gift descendeth*: all praise and glory is due.  
 James i. 17.

5 This consideration sheweth us the reason we have to submit entirely to the providence of God, with contentedness and acquiescence in every condition: for seeing we are *God's possessions*, (Θεοῦ κτήματα, as Plato<sup>p</sup> calleth us,) he having made us whatever we are, according to all accounts and capacities, whether as men by his common providence, or as Christians by his especial grace; he surely hath the best right and title that can be upon us; he may justly dispose of us and use us as he thinks good; we may well thence be obliged, according to the apostolical precept, *To glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are God's*: if we repine at or complain of God's dealing with us, may he not justly return to us that answer in the Gospel, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* Shall we not suffer God to order his own family according to his discretion and pleasure; to assign what station, to allow what portion he pleaseth to his own children, without our offence or displeasure? Shall we pretend to know better than he what is fit to be done? Shall we claim a right to dispense his goods, or desire to be carvers for ourselves? If it be unjust and unreasonable to do thus, then in all

1 Cor. vi. 20.  
 Matt. xx. 15.

<sup>p</sup> Plat. Phæd. [62 B. Οὐ μέντοι ἀλλὰ τότε γέ μοι δοκεῖ εὖ λέγεσθαι, τὸ θεοὺς εἶναι ἡμῶν τοὺς ἐπιμελουμένους καὶ ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν τῶν κτημάτων τοῖς θεοῖς εἶναι.]

reason we ought to be content in every state that he disposeth us into, and to undergo patiently whatever he imposeth on us; yea, we have reason to be more than content with everything incident, not only as justly proceeding from him, but as presumable to be good and convenient for us; for is it not fit that we should think, that God will order things for the best good of his own children? Can we conceive that he willingly will hurt, or will not rather help them; that he will design them any mischief, yea that he will easily suffer it? *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?* Isai. xlix. 15. *Yea, they may, God telleth us, forget; yet he will not forget us: sooner, indeed, may the most tender parents become unnaturally regardless, spiteful, and cruel toward their children, than the immutable God (who in his nature is unexpressibly benign and compassionate) shall neglect the good of his offspring: good reason therefore have we to be satisfied with all that befalleth us.*

6 Particularly this consideration obligeth us to be patient and cheerful in the sorest afflictions, as deeming them to come from a paternal hand, inflicted with great affection and compassion, designed for, and tending to our good: *Thou shalt,* Deut. viii. 5. *saith God to the Israelites, consider in thy heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee: and, We, saith the Apostle,* Heb. xii. 9, 10. *have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that*

**SERM.** *we might be partakers of his holiness.* The punishments inflicted on us by men may perhaps proceed from passion; but God assuredly never inflicts any thing grievous on us, but out of pure good-will: and what sweeter consolation can there be, than to know that the most cross and distasteful accidents befalling us do (according to the intention of him that bringeth them on us, and manageth them) conduce to our profit, and shall in the event, if we do patiently receive them, and by our untowardness do not impede their effect, prove wholesome and advantageous to us?

7 This consideration doth also shew the reason we have to obey those precepts, which enjoin us to rely upon God's providence; to cast all our burden  
 Matt. vi. 25. and care upon God; to be solicitous and anxious  
 Phil. iv. 6. about nothing which concerneth our sustenance;  
 1 Pet. v. 7. for children commonly (especially such as have  
 Ps. xxxvii. 5; able and kind parents) do live altogether void of  
 iv. 23. care concerning their maintenance, being assured that their parents will concern themselves to provide whatever is necessary or convenient for them: and how much more have we reason to live free of solicitude in such respects, who have a Father so infinitely sufficient to supply all our wants, and so tenderly affected toward us; so ever present with us, and always vigilant over us; who cannot but see and know our needs; and can most easily satisfy them, and is no less willing and ready, if we trust in him, to do it? *Do not, saith our Lord, take care, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?—for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* The like reason

Matt. vi. 31, 32.

did even natural light suggest to a Philosopher: *If, saith he, kindred with Cæsar, or with any other great man in Rome, is sufficient to make a man live securely, without contempt, and without fear, will not the having God our Maker and Father and Guardian, free us from griefs and fears<sup>1</sup>?* It is extreme infidelity concerning either the providence of God, or his power, or his goodness, (that is, the practical disbelief of this point, or in our hearts disavowing God to be our Father,) which causeth all that carking and distraction of mind, that fear of wants, that grief for losses and disappointments, which do commonly possess men, together with those covetous desires and unjust practices, with which the world aboundeth: he can hardly be guilty of them, who believeth and considereth, that God doth thus stand related and affected toward him.

8 This consideration doth more generally in all regards serve to breed and cherish our faith, to raise our hope, to quicken our devotion: for whom shall we confide in, if not in such a Father? from whom can we expect good, if not from him, who hath already given us so much, even all that we have? to whom can we have recourse freely and cheerfully, upon any occasion, if not to him, who so kindly inviteth and calleth us to him, in so endearing terms, with so obliging an appellation? If we in any need, corporal or spiritual, request

<sup>1</sup> Epict. Diss. 1. 9. [Ἀλλὰ πρὸς μὲν τὸν Καίσαρα ἡ συγγένεια, ἢ ἄλλον τινα τῶν μέγα δυναμένων ἐν Ῥώμῃ, ἱκανὴ παρέχειν ἐν ἀσφαλείᾳ διάγοντας εἶναι, καὶ ἀκαταφρονήτους. καὶ δεδοκότας μὴδ' ἥτιον· τὸ δὲ τὸν Θεὸν ποιητὴν ἔχειν, καὶ πατέρα, καὶ κηδεμόνα, οὐκ ἐτι μᾶς ἐξαιρήσεται λυπῶν καὶ φόβων;]

SERM.  
X.

Matt. vii.  
9, 10, 11.

Luke xi.  
13.

succour or supply from him, can we suspect that such a Father (so infinitely wise, so able, so good) will refuse us, or can fail us? No; *What man is there that if his son ask him bread, will give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him?* So doth our Saviour with most convincing force of reason move us to the duty of prayer, with faith and confidence of good success. St Luke hath it, *How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* implying, that, upon account of this relation, we may in all our spiritual needs (if we do need light and direction in our doubts, or strength against temptations, or comfort in our distresses) be assured of finding requisite assistance and relief. We should therefore, upon all exigencies, address ourselves to God, not with the fear of slaves, nor with the suspicion of strangers, but with dispositions of heart suitable to children, with a reverent love, and humble confidence, and cheerful hope.

9 Lastly, considering this point will direct and prompt us how to behave ourselves towards all God's creatures, according to their respective natures and capacities: If God be the Father of all things, they are all thence in some sort our brethren, and so may claim from us a fraternal affection and demeanour answerable thereto: Shall we then scorn, abuse, trample or tyrannise over any of them? doth it become us to do so? will our common Father like it, or endure it? If we

are all branches sprouting from one stock, or streams issuing from the same source of Divine SERM. X. beneficence and fecundity; if we are members of one body, of one commonwealth, of one family, we are then surely obliged to an universal benevolence; to be kind and compassionate, to be helpful and beneficial unto all, so far as our capacity reacheth; we are to endeavour, as we can, to preserve the order and promote the welfare of the world, and of all things in it: even upon this score the meanest of God's creatures is not to be despised, the vilest worm is not to be misused by us; since even it is the work of his hands, and the subject of his care, yea the object of his kindness, *Who, as the Psalmist telleth us, is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works:* Pa. cxlv. 9, 16. but especially toward those beings, who according to a more peculiar and excellent sense are entitled the sons of our Father, and to whom we are more nearly allied, by our better part, (that Divine breath, which both they and we drew from God,) toward all intellectual beings<sup>r</sup>, we do learn hence our respective duties: of love and respect toward those our elder brethren, the Angels, (those of them, which have not degenerated from their nature, and apostatized from their duty;) of charity and good-will toward each other<sup>s</sup>; which if we do not maintain, we may consider, that we

<sup>r</sup> Συγγενὴς πᾶν τὸ λογικόν.—M. Ant. III. § 4.

Συγγενὴς, οὐχὶ αἵματος ἢ σπέρματος τοῦ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ νοῦ, καὶ θελας ἀπομοίρας μέτοχος.—Id. II. § 1.

<sup>s</sup> Si ab uno Deo inspirati omnes et animati sumus, quid aliud quam fratres sumus? Et quidem conjunctiores, quod animis, quam quod corporibus. . . . Ergo pro belluis immanibus sunt habendi, qui homini nocent, &c.—Lact. Instit. [VI. 10.]

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Rom. xii.  
10.

thereby are first undutiful and unkind to God our common Father, and then even to ourselves; we do hate and harm both God's relations and our own, (God's children and our brethren,) by hating or harming any man whatever; especially any good man, any Christian brother; who by other more peculiar bands is straitly tied to us; who upon so many better and higher accounts standeth related unto God and to ourselves<sup>t</sup>. Aristotle saith that all men, upon grounds of natural cognation and similitude, are naturally friends to one another<sup>u</sup>; much more are all good men so by participation of a more excellent nature, and by a nobler resemblance; whence it is St Paul's precept to Christians, that they should be τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, that they should bear a natural affection each to other in brotherly love: Christians are in a more peculiar and eminent manner styled brethren; and that charity, which in respect to others is called *philanthropy*, (or humanity,) in regard to them is named *philadelphia*, (or brotherly affection:) hence to perform all fraternal offices toward every Christian, to wish heartily and earnestly to promote his good, to compassionate and, as we are able, to relieve his evils, to bear his infirmities, and to comport with unkindness from him, and the like duties, are incumbent on us, as peculiar to our profession.

These are the principal uses which the consideration of this point suggesteth. Now God

<sup>t</sup> Ἄνθρωπον, οὐκ ἀνέξη τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τοῦ σαντοῦ, δεῖ ἔχει τὸν Δία πρόγονον;—Epict. Diss. 1. 13. [3.]

<sup>u</sup> Οἰκίον ἅπας ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπου, καὶ φίλον —Arist. Eth. viii 1. [3.]

Almighty, the great Father of all things, and especially our gracious Father in Christ Jesus, SERM.  
X. grant that by his holy grace we may perform all filial duty toward him, (rendering unto him all love and reverence, all praise and thanks, all worship and obedience, together with all faith and hope in him,) that we may behave ourselves in all things as becometh this relation, that we may resemble him in all goodness, that we may persist here continually in his favour, and obtain hereafter the blessed inheritance from him; this he of infinite mercy vouchsafe unto us, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praise. *Amen.*

Even to God the Father, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, the Author and Donor of all good; to God the Son, the Redeemer of all the world, and foundation of all spiritual blessings; to God the Holy Ghost, the fountain of all true goodness, joy, and comfort, be for ever and ever all glory and praise. *Amen.*

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**The Father Almighty.**

**SERMON XI.**

REV. XI. 17.

*O Lord God Almighty.*

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XI.

EVERY attribute of God is a proper and useful object of our consideration ; as being apt to mind us of our duty, and to excite us to the practice thereof ; to beget in us those dispositions of mind (that love and reverence toward God, that faith and hope in him) which we ought to have ; and to draw from us real performances of obedience to him : each of them doth ground obligations to piety, and yieldeth arguments to the practice thereof ; to which purposes, that considering this Divine attribute, Almighty (mentioned in our text), doth much avail, and that it therefore well deserveth to be pressed upon us, will appear more distinctly from the application we shall make thereof ; at present we may perceive how considerable it is, by observing in gross ; 1 That it is frequently in Holy Scripture singled forth, as most proper to God ; as most fully expressive of his glorious excellency and majesty ; particularly the most illuminate ministers of God's praise, the seraphims in Isaiah, the four wights (or living creatures) in this book, and the twenty-four elders in this place, do therefore use it 2 It is that attribute which is alone most expressly set down in our Creed as

Isai. vi. 3.  
Rev. iv. 8.

especially necessary to be believed and considered : SERM.  
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we say therein, *I believe in God, the Father Almighty.* 3 It is that with which we daily address our devotions unto God ; in our prayers we say, *Almighty and most merciful Father* ; in our praises we cry, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty*, or (which is the same) *Lord God of Sabaoth*. It seems therefore fit and useful, that we should well understand the proper and full meaning thereof, together with the obligations grounded thereon, and the inducements it affordeth to good practice ; that so when we hear it used in Scripture, when we profess to believe it, when we apply it to God in our devotions, we may so reflect thereupon, as to be admonished of our duty, and moved to the performance thereof. First therefore I will endeavour somewhat to explain it ; then shall make a practical application thereof.

The title, epithet, or attribute *παντοκράτωρ*, which we (finding no other word more properly and fully to express it) do render *Almighty*, or omnipotent, is frequently, in a manner peculiar and characteristic, ascribed to God : the use thereof in the New Testament is, by citation or imitation, transferred from the Greek of the Old, where it serveth to express those two famous and usual names of God, *Sabaoth* and *Shaddai* : especially it answereth to the former ; for the latter is only rendered thereby in some places of the Book of Job : but the former, *Sabaoth* (when interpreted and not left in its own sound), is constantly rendered *παντοκράτωρ*. I call *Sabaoth*<sup>a</sup> a name of God ; for that it is so, it is

<sup>a</sup> Ὁ Ὄλβιος ἀνέπερ οἱ Σαβαὶθ νόον ἐσθλὸν ἔδωκεν.—Vers. Sibyl.  
Lib. 1.

SERM. in several places expressly affirmed; as in Jere-  
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Jer. l. 34.  
Isai. xlviii.  
2.

Amos iv.  
13.

miah; *Their Redeemer is strong, Jehovah Sabaoth is his name*: and in Isaiah; *For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; the Lord of hosts is his name*: and in Amos; *He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought—Jehovah Elohei Sabaoth is his name.* (From hence a sort of Jove, called Ζεὺς Ζαββαΐσιος (Ζαββαΐσιος,) mentioned in some Pagan writers, was, as some critics suppose<sup>b</sup>, deduced.) Now as all the names and appellations of God are significant, and denote some perfection, or some prerogative belonging to him, (as *Jehovah* signifieth his self-subsistence, independency, immutability, and eternity; *Elohim* his omnipotence; *Shaddai* his all-sufficiency; *Adonai* his supreme dominion and authority,) so doth this name or title, *Sabaoth*, primitively seem to import God's universal conduct and managery of all creatures: for all things in the world, as being ranged in a goodly and convenient order, (like an army marching in array, or marshalled to battle,) are called armies, or *Sabaoth*. Thus, (after the history of the creation it is said,) *The heavens and earth were finished, and all the host of them, (τὰς κόσμος αὐτῶν, all the furniture, or all the battalion*

<sup>b</sup> Cicero, Aristoph. &c. Selden. de Diis Syr. cap. iii. [Opp. Vol. ii. p. 229. Unde nam Jupiter Sabazius? nonne a Jehovah Sabaoth, quod inculcante sæpius Jeremia, proprium Dei Optimi Maximi nomen? Asiæ enim regem fuisse aiunt veteres; et uti peregrinum et civitate ejiciendum vexavit olim Aristophanes Comicus, quod animadvertit etiam Cicero, Lib. ii. de Legibus. &c.

Novos vero deos, et in his colendis nocturnas pervigilationes sic Aristophanes, facetissimus poeta veteris comœdiæ, vexat, ut apud eum Sabazius, et quidam alii dii peregrini judicati, e civitate ejiciantur.—Cic. de Leg. ii. 15.]

of them :) and, *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made*, saith the Psalmist, *and all the host of them* : and, *Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure* ; that is, all creatures which are subject to his command, and subservient to his will : and, *Lift up*, saith Isaiah, *your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things; that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth*: where God is represented to us as the general of an army, drawing forth and ordering his creatures, as a general summoneth to a rendezvous, mustereth and embattleth his troops : hence this title of *Sabaoth*, which is rendered *παντοκράτωρ*, doth seem derived.

But we need not deal so strictly as to limit the sense of this word, according to its original rise, or its use in translation ; but since it hath been authenticated by its use in the holy fountains of truth, the New Testament, and is there used so as to signify or imply the sum of Divine perfections and pre-eminencies ; being, as it seems, selected especially for that purpose, we may presume to take it in its common latitude, for *ὁ πάντων κρατῶν*, or *ὁ πάντων κράτος ἔχων*; according to which extent, it may have various importances, somewhat different ; it may accordingly denote, 1 Right, or authority, over all beings, *Omni-potestas*; and, 2 A power, or ability, to do all things, *Omni-potentia* : 3 The actual exercise of such authority, and such power in ruling and disposing all things ; *Omni-potentatus* : 4 The possession of all things ; or the containing and holding all things in his hand ;

SERM. *Omni-tenentia* (it is St Augustine's<sup>o</sup> word) : 5 The  
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preservation or upholding of all things in their being and state : for the word *κρατεῖν*, according to its propriety and ordinary use, may infer and ground all these significations ; and according to them all, God is truly *παντοκράτωρ*. Let us survey the particulars, and shew how God, especially in Holy Scripture, is represented in respect to them.

1 God is *παντοκράτωρ*, as having a just right  
 1 Tim. vi. and authority over all things ; he naturally is the  
 15, 16. sovereign Lord and Emperor of the world ; for whatever imaginable reason or ground there is of authority, doth in respect to all things agree unto God. Aristotle, in his Politics, discourseth thus : Government doth aim at and tend to the mutual benefit of the governor and governed ; he therefore who is most able and best disposed to provide for and procure the common benefit, is according to natural reason and justice (secluding other considerations of laws and compacts, of former constitutions, of present possession, and the like) to be the governor ; or he deserves, and is fit to be so, and (no other reason hindering) becometh such. *That*, saith the Philosopher, *which naturally is apt or able to provide, doth naturally rule, and naturally lordeth<sup>d</sup>* : whence the soul hath a right to govern the body ; and men naturally do rule over beasts ; and were there any such persons, as did without any question very eminently exceed others in

<sup>o</sup> [Creatoris namque potentia, et Omnipotentis atque Omni-tenentis virtus, causa subsistendi est omni creaturæ.—In Gen. ad lit. Lib. iv. cap. 12. Opp. Tom. iii. col. 126 E.]

<sup>d</sup> Τὸ μὲν γὰρ δυνάμενον τῇ διανοίᾳ προορᾶν ἄρχον φύσει καὶ δέσποζον φύσει. [Arist. Polit. i. 2.]

wisdom and goodness, to them, according to natural congruity, the government of others would appertain; the common advantage so requiring: and if such excellency of nature be a foundation of authority, then God, who in wisdom and goodness doth incomparably surpass all things, hath assuredly the right to govern all: so a Pagan author could discourse; *There is, saith Cicero, nothing better than God; therefore it is necessary the world should be ruled by him*<sup>\*</sup>: he is the only wise, as 1 Tim. i. St Paul telleth us, and thence most able; he is 17. Luke xviii. only good, as our Saviour teacheth us, and thence 19. most apt to manage all things for the general welfare and benefit of the world. If also eminency of power doth qualify for dominion, (as it surely doth; for that which cannot be withstood must in reason be submitted to; it is vain to question that authority, which by force altogether irresistible can assert and maintain itself,) God hath the only right, nothing in the world being able to contest his title; for, *Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee?* says the holy Psalmist contemplating this Divine attribute: all things are weak and feeble in comparison; are altogether in his hand, and under his feet; are thoroughly at his discretion and disposal: *The Lord,* Jer. x. 10. saith the prophet, *is the true God, and the everlasting King; at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation:* and, *How terrible,* saith the Psalmist, *art* Ps. lvi. 3.

<sup>\*</sup> Nihil est præstantius Deo; ab eo igitur necesse est mundum regi.—Cic. de Nat. Deor. ii. [30, 77.]

SERM. XI. *thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee—He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves.*

If also to have made all things, and to preserve them, doth create a right of governing, (as it must needs do so; for what can we justly challenge a dominion over, if not over our own works, over that which we continually keep and nourish; over that which altogether depends upon us, and which subsists at our pleasure?) then well may the Apo-  
 Rev. iv. 11; *calyptical Elders thus acknowledge; Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, (that is, to possess the royal majesty and sovereign dominion over the world;) for thou hast made all things, and for thy will they are, and were created: well might Every creature that is in the heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and those things which are in the sea, and all things in them, cry out there; To him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion (τὸ κράτος) for ever and ever: well might king Hezekiah say,*  
 Isa. xxxvii. 16. *O Lord of hosts—thou art the God, thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth: and the Levites in Nehemiah;*  
 Neh. ix. 6. *Thou, even thou, art the Lord alone; thou hast made heaven and earth; the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts; the earth, and all things that are therein; the sea, and all that is therein; and thou preservest them all; and all the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Thus is God παντοκράτωρ; as he is upon all imaginable accounts, and according to all*

reasonable grounds of right, the rightful Sovereign of all things ; as he is *Hominum Divinque æterna potestas*<sup>†</sup>, as the wisest Poet doth acknowledge and style him. SERM.  
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2 He is also such in regard to his infinite power, as that word may signify omnipotent. Natural light affordeth pregnant arguments of the greatness of his power, displayed in the constitution and conservation of the world ; his disposing so stupendously vast, so unconceivably various creatures into so comely and stable a posture, whence *His eternal power and divinity are discerned*, as St Paul telleth us ; for he that could effect so much, his power must needs be far greater than we can imagine or comprehend : to natural light, I say, it is incomprehensibly great, and exceedeth all definite limits ; but Holy Scripture more clearly and fully declareth the extent of his power ; asserting, that it is not only in respect to our weak conceit and narrow capacity, but in itself truly infinite, reaching the utmost possibility of things : it teacheth us, that whatever is not contrary to his nature, or to his essential perfections, (to his goodness, fidelity, holiness, wisdom ; ) which it doth not misbecome him to do ; or which is not repugnant to the nature of things to be done, (that is, which doth not imply a contradiction, and thereby is impossible, and becomes no object of power ; ) for, *Such things he cannot do, because he is omnipotent*<sup>‡</sup> ; as St Austin acutely says ; he is able with perfect ease and facility to achieve it : there is among

<sup>†</sup> Virg. Æn. [x. 18.]

<sup>‡</sup> Unde propterea quædam non potest, quia Omnipotens est. — De Civ. Dei v. 10. [Opp. Tom. vii. col. 125 B.]



- SERM. XI. things good and possible nothing so difficult, but he can perform it ; nothing so strong or stubborn, but he can subdue it : *Is anything too hard for the Lord?* said God to Abraham, when Sarah doubted, or wondered concerning the promise, that she in so extreme an age should become fruitful : *Behold,* said the prophet Jeremiah in his prayer, *thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and thy stretched out arm ; and there is nothing too hard for thee:* Οὐκ ἀδυνατήσῃ παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ πᾶν ῥῆμα ; *Nothing* (that can be said, or conceived, or performed) *shall be impossible to God*, if he pleaseth to design or undertake it, said the Angel to the Blessed Virgin, when he delivered so strange a message to her concerning an event so wonderful and supernatural, as our Saviour's conception of her : that a rich man should be induced entirely to comply with God's will, and willingly to part with all, our Saviour affirmed exceedingly difficult, (hardly anything could be supposed more difficult ; harder it was, than *For a camel to pass through the eye of a needle*;) but to satisfy his disciples' scruple thence arising, he subjoins ; *With men* (or according to the common sense of men) *this is impossible, but to God all things are possible :* *In thine hand,* said king Jehoshaphat, *there is power, and might, so that none is able to withstand thee :* and king Nebuchadnezzar having felt an experiment of his power, and being returned to a right understanding, confesseth thus ; *He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ? The Lord of hosts, saith the Prophet, hath purposed, and who shall disannul it ?*
- Gen. xviii. 14.
- Jer. xxxii. 17, 27.
- Luke i. 37.
- Matt. xix. 24;
- ver. 26.
- 2 Chr. xx. 6.
- Dan. iv. 35.
- Isai. xiv. 27.

his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it SERM. XI.  
back? To stop the sun in his career, to make the  
sea stand upon an heap, to draw streams of water  
from a rock, to restrain fire from burning, to  
restore the blind and lame, to raise the dead, to  
suspend, thwart, invert the course of nature, with  
all such things which we so wonder at, and term  
miracles, are comparatively but slender, and, as it  
were, perfunctory instances of his power; for with  
the greatest ease, by the least exertion of his power,  
by a thought, a look, a touch, a word, the greatest  
things are performed: *He looketh on the earth, and* Pa. civ. 32.  
*it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they smoke:*  
*He overturneth the mountains in his anger, and* Job ix. 5;  
*shaketh the earth out of her place: The pillars of* xxvi. 11.  
*heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof.*  
These seem great and strange effects of power;  
yet in respect to what he can do, and hath done,  
they are small; for he at first made the whole world  
with a word; so the History of the Creation ex-  
presseth it, and so the Psalmist telleth us; *By the* Pa. xxxiii. 6, 9.  
*word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the*  
*host of them by the breath of his mouth; and by a*  
*word he doth preserve it, Upholding,* as the Apostle Heb. i. 3.  
*to the Hebrews speaketh, all things by the word of*  
*his power, or by his powerful word; and by a word*  
*he can destroy and annihilate all things; yea more*  
*easily, in a manner, he can do it, even by his mere*  
*silence, or by withdrawing that salutary breath, by*  
*virtue of which all things subsist; Thou hidest thy* Pa. civ. 29.  
*face, saith the Psalmist, they are troubled; thou* Job xxxiv. 14, 20.  
*withholdest thy breath, they die, and return to their*  
*dust.* For we may consider, that in this respect  
also God is all-powerful, as being the source from

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which all power is derived, by which all power is sustained, upon which all power doth depend ; he not only can do all things inclusively, but exclusively, or so that nothing can be done without him :  
 John xv. 5. that of our Saviour, *Without me ye can do nothing*, is not only true in spiritual, but in all other matters :  
 Acts xvii. 25, 28. *He*, as St Paul preached at Athens, *giveth life* (or being, with all vital faculties) *and breath*, (that is, all natural powers) *and all things unto all: In him* (or rather by him) *we live, and move, and have our being* : that is, whatever we are, whatever we have, whatever we can do, doth proceed from him, doth depend upon him. Thus is God *παντοκράτωρ*, as all-powerful.

3 God is also so, by reason that he doth actually exercise all dominion, and doth exert his power continually, according to his good pleasure : he not only hath a just title to govern all things, and a perfect ability to sway in all matters, but he constantly useth them :  
 Ps. ciii. 19; xlvii. 7, 8; cxliii. 4, 6. *The Lord hath prepared his throne in heaven, and his kingdom ruleth over all: God is the King of all the earth; God reigneth over the heathen*, (or the nations ;) *God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness: the Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens: Who is like unto the Lord our God, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth?* It is indeed, as the holy man saith, a great condescension in God, that he will vouchsafe to have the inspection and administration of things so much inferior to him ; yet for the common good of his creatures he is pleased to do it ; *Thine*, saith king David, *O Lord, is the kingdom, and thou art exalted as head above all ; both riches and honour come of*

1 Chron.  
xxix. 11,  
12.

thee, and thou reignest over all; in thine hand is SERM. XI  
 power and might, &c. He is, indeed, the only Governor, absolutely, originally, and independently  
 so; ὁ μόνος δυνάστης, *The only Potentate*, as St Paul 1 Tim. vi. 15.  
 calleth him; all authority and power are imparted  
 by him, and subordinate to him; from his disposal  
 and direction all potentates do receive them; in  
 his name and behalf, by virtue of his commission  
 and command, as his delegates and ministers, for  
 his honour, interest, and service, they administer  
 any just dominion or power. It was Nebuchad-  
 nezzar's doom to be driven from men, until he did  
 understand and embrace this truth, so necessary  
 for all governors to know and consider; that, *The* Dan. iv. 25; ii. 21; vii. 27.  
*Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth*  
*it to whomsoever he will; that, His kingdom is an*  
*everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve*  
*and obey him: Promotion cometh neither from the* Ps. lxxv. 6, 7.  
*east, nor from the west, nor from the south: but* Rom. xiii. 1.  
*God is the Judge; he putteth down one, and setteth*  
*up another: There is no power but from God; the* John xix. 11.  
*powers that are, are appointed by God: The judg-* Deut. i. 17.  
*ment is God's, (as Moses said in his charge to the*  
*judges of Israel,) being exercised by his order, and*  
*in his behalf. Thus is God παντοκράτωρ, as the*  
*only absolute sovereign Lord, the Author and*  
*Fountain of all just authority, The Lord of lords,* Rev. xix. 16.  
*and King of kings, as the Scripture often doth style* Ps. cxxxvi. 3.  
*him.*

4 God is also παντοκράτωρ, as the true proprietary and just possessor of all things. *Blessed* Gen. xiv. 19.  
*be Abraham, said king Melchizedek, of the most*  
*high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and, Be-* Deut. x. 14.  
*hold, said Moses to his people, the heaven and the*

**SERM. XI.** *heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God; the earth also, with all that is therein: and, The earth, saith the Psalmist, is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein; for he hath founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the floods: and, The heavens, saith he again, are thine, the earth also is thine; as for the world, and the fulness thereof, (that is, all which the world contains, all with which it is furnished and replenished,) thou hast founded them: and, The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land. All things, they say, are the goods and possessions of God; proving it from hence, that he made them, and thereby acquired a propriety in them: for there is no more evident and perfect ground of propriety than this. The products of our invention and care, the fruits of our endeavour and industry, even we do think that reasonably we may call our own, and justly claim the enjoyment of: how much more he, that by an original, uncommunicated, independent wisdom and power, hath contrived and produced all things! From thence surely doth result such a title to them all, that the entire and absolute disposal of them doth appertain to him; so that he may apply them, as the potter doth the vessels which he maketh, (it is the Scripture comparison,) to what use he thinketh good; that he may freely place and bestow them where he pleaseth; that he may take them away, or transfer them, when he seeth fit: they can never be so alienated from him, that the enjoyment of them doth not wholly depend on him, and that at pleasure (his wisdom and goodness permitting, his truth and word being solved) he may not resume them to himself.*

**Ps. xxiv. 1;**  
**l. 12;**

**lxxxix. 11;**

**xcv. 5.**

**Isai. xlv. 9;**

**lxiv. 8;**

**x. 15.**

**Jer. xviii.**

**6.**

**lrom. ix.**

**21.**

5 God is also παντοκράτωρ, as containing and SERM.  
XI. comprehending all things by his immense presence and infinite capacity: it is a name which the Jewish doctors commonly apply to God, (המקום) *hamakom*, the place, because all things do subsist in him; *He being*, as St Hierome speaks, *infused through all things, and circumfused about all things; so as to penetrate them within, and to contain them without*<sup>b</sup>; so as to be *within all things not included, and without all things not excluded*: and, *We do not*, saith Minutius Felix, *only live in the eye, but in the bosom of God*<sup>1</sup>. The whole world, how vast soever it seemeth to our narrow conceit, is but as a drop, or as an atom of dust, in his hand: *Behold*, Isai. xl. 15,  
17; xlviii.  
13; xl. 12. saith the Prophet elegantly and truly, *the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing; all nations are before him as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity*: and, *I fill heaven and earth*, saith God in Jeremiah: and king Solomon Jer. xxiii.  
24.  
1 Kings  
viii. 27.  
Ps. cxxxix.  
7, &c. in his prayer saith more; *Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee*: and, *Whither*, saith the Psalmist, *shall I go from thy spirit? or whither*

<sup>b</sup> In omnibus infusus, et circumfusus, ut cuncta penetret interior, et contineat exterior.—Hier. ad Marcell. 5. [Verbatim. Profecto non ambiges, etiam ante resurrectionem sic in Dominico corpore habitasse Deum Verbum, ut in Patre esset, et cœli circumculum clauderet, atque in omnibus infusus esset et circumfusus, id est, ut cuncta penetraret interior, et contineret exterior. Ep. ad Marcell. De quinque Quest. N. T. Opp. Tom. iv. p. 1. col. 166.]

Intra omnia nec inclusus, extra omnia nec exclusus.

Solus est omnia; opus suum et extra, et intra tenet.—Sen. Præf. Nat. Quæst.

<sup>1</sup> Non solum in oculis Dei sed et in sinu vivimus.—Minuc. Fel. [xxxiii. 3. p. 168. Ed. Holden.]

**SERM.** *shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up*  
**XI.** *into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in*  
*hell, behold thou art there: if I take the wings of*  
*the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of*  
*the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy*  
*right hand shall hold me.*

**Col. i. 17.** 6 Lastly, God is *παντοκράτωρ* in regard that  
**Heb. i. 3.** he sustains and preserves all things. *When, saith*  
*St Gregory Nyssen, we hear the word παντοκράτωρ,*  
*we understand this, that God containeth all things*  
**Neh. ix. 6.** *in being<sup>k</sup>: Thou, say the Levites in Nehemiah,*  
*even thou, art God alone; thou hast made heaven*  
*and earth, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts,*  
*the earth, and all things that are therein, and thou*  
*preservest them all; and the host of heaven wor-*  
*shippeth thee.*

In all these respects and senses doth the title *παντοκράτωρ* (which we for want of a word more adequate and expressive, do render *Almighty*) belong to God: the Greek word, in the latitude of its signification, according to its etymology, comprehendeth all these senses, and the design in its use, as we before touched, warranteth the taking it in the largest acception; but however it certainly respecteth the former senses, denoting the absolute universal sovereignty, and the immense irresistible power of God: the belief and consideration of which particulars is of great importance, and may have a very useful influence upon our practice: for,

I. If God be the just Sovereign of all things,

<sup>k</sup> Ὅταν τῆς παντοκράτωρ φωνῆς ἀκούσωμεν, τοῦτο νοοῦμεν, τὰ πάντα τὸν Θεὸν ἐν τῇ εἰσὶν συνέχειν. [Con. Eunom. Orat. i. Opp. Tom. II. p. 39 D.]

having a right to govern the world, and actually exercising it; then, SERM.  
XI.

1 We see our condition and state here in this world. We live not in an anarchy<sup>1</sup>, or in perfect liberty; we are not our own masters, or have a right to guide our actions according to our own will, or after our own fancy; but are under government; a government most absolute and arbitrary; the laws whereof we may not dispute, the proceedings whereof we cannot resist. Whence,

2 We understand our duty; that as subjects and vassals we are obliged to render all awful reverence, worship, and obedience to God; humbly to adore the majesty, readily to perform the commands, and patiently to submit to the will of our great Sovereign; to conform all our actions to that heavenly law, under which we are born and live in the world. *We do not*, even Plutarch could tell us, *come hither into life to make laws, but to obey those which are appointed by God, who ordereth all things; to observe the decrees of Destiny and Providence<sup>m</sup>.*

3 Hence we may discern the heinousness of every sin, or transgression of God's law; it receiving great aggravation hence. It hence appeareth not only a matter of simple folly, or private inconvenience, (contrary to our reason,) but of public mischief and general ill consequence; being committed against the crown and dignity of

<sup>b</sup> Τραχὺς μόναρχος οὐδ' ὑπεύθυνος κρατεῖ.—

Æschyl. [Prom. 324.]

<sup>m</sup> Οὐ γὰρ νομοθετήσαντες πάρεσμεν εἰς τὸν βίον, ἀλλὰ πεισόμενοι τοῖς διατεταγμένοις ὑπὸ τῶν τὰ δὲλα πρυτανεύόντων θεῶν, καὶ τοῖς τῆς εἰμαρμένης καὶ προνοίας θεσμοῖς.—Consol. ad Apol. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 424. Ed. Reisk.]



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God Almighty; against the peace and order of the world; which subsist by the observation of his laws. Every sin is an act of high rebellion, a breach of our natural allegiance, a lifting up ourselves, as is said of Nebuchadnezzar, against our Sovereign; an infringing that right, and violating that honour of his, which he by his place and office is concerned to maintain and vindicate.

4 We may hence learn what reason we have to be content in every condition, and to undergo patiently every event befalling us: for that our station is allotted to us by an unquestionable right, and all things are dispensed to us by a common law, from which nothing can be exempted; for that things come not by a blind necessity or chance, but are disposed and managed by sovereign reason and wisdom. *We must, saith an Ethnic Philosopher, not be displeased at any of these things; for we are come into that world, where we must live by these laws*<sup>a</sup>: and, *A good man must needs be granted to be highly pious toward God; he therefore will sustain all accidents with equanimity; as knowing them to happen unto him by a Divine law, by which all things proceed*<sup>o</sup>. It were, indeed, intolerable arrogance and frowardness in us to desire an exemption from that common law, to which all things are subject; to wish ourselves out of that order, in which the all-guiding Providence

<sup>a</sup> Nihil horum indignandum est; in eum intravimus mundum, in quo his legibus vivitur.—Sen. Ep. xci. [15.]

<sup>o</sup> Virum bonum, concedas necesse est, summæ pietatis erga Deos esse; itaque quicquid illi acciderit, æquo animo sustinebit. Sciēt enim id accidisse lege divina, qua universa procedunt.—Ep. lxxvi. [17.]

hath set us; to be dissatisfied with anything, which SERM. XI.  
by the Supreme Wisdom is assigned to us: it —  
becometh us to say with old Eli, *It is the Lord, let* 1 Sam. iii. 18.  
*him do what seemeth him good*; to say upon all  
occasions with David; *I was dumb, I opened not* Ps. xxxix. 9.  
*my mouth, because thou didst it.* Upon this con-  
sideration we should not only be satisfied with,  
and acquiesce in, but praise and adore all occur-  
rences of Providence, how unkindly soever and  
distasteful they appear to us; supposing a just  
and reasonable cause to lie under them, although  
indiscernible to us<sup>p</sup>. Yea further,

5 It is a matter of great consolation to reflect,  
that we and all the world are under such a govern-  
ment; it is a common felicity, it is our particular  
happiness, that we are so; for it is no unjust  
usurper, it is no merciless tyrant, it is no fond,  
no weak, no careless person that we are in sub-  
jection to, but a most just, most mild, most  
gracious, most wise, most powerful, most vigilant  
Lord; who will deal most equally and most be-  
nignly with us; who sincerely and earnestly tenders  
our welfare; who is watchful and careful for our  
good; who is able to provide for all our needs,  
and to protect us from all mischief; all whose laws  
do only aim at our benefit; all whose proceedings  
toward us are full of equity, goodness, and truth;  
who will not only favourably accept, but most  
bountifully recompense our obedience; whom to Deut. x. 12.  
serve and obey is a privilege far better and more

<sup>p</sup> Χρὴ τοίνυν τοῖς προσέχοντες πάντα θαυμάζειν, πάντα ἐπαιεῖν,  
πάντα ἀνεξέστως ἀποδέχεσθαι τὰ τῆς προνοίας ἔργα, κἂν φαίνεται  
πολλοῖς ἄδικα, διὰ τὸ ἄγνωστον εἶναι, καὶ ἀκατάληπτον τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν  
πρόνοιαν.—Damasc. de Orthod. Fid. ii. 29. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 196 c.]

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**XI.**  
desirable for us, than to be free, than to be wholly at our own disposal, and under our own guidance; the very nature and the end of his government being only to preserve us, and to rescue us from the errors, the slaveries, the vexations and miseries we are apt to incur; by virtue of whose universal dominion we are secured, that no malice of devil, no injustice of men, no sort of enemy whatever, (excepting our own wilful disobedience to his laws and directions,) shall be able to do us harm; for all them he governs and he curbs no less than ourselves. Of this our King it is truly said, that

**Ps. lxxxix.** *Justice and judgment are the establishment of his*  
**14;** *throne; mercy and truth go before his face; that,*

**cxlv. 17.** *He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his*

**Rev. xv. 3.**

**Ps. xlv. 6.** *doings; that, The sceptre of his kingdom is a right*

**Matt. xi.** *sceptre; that, His yoke is easy, and his burden*  
**30.** *light. In confidence of his protection we may say*

**Ps. xxvii.** *with the Psalmist, The Lord is my light and my*  
**1, 2;** *salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the*  
*strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

**xlvi. 1, 2;** *God is our refuge and strength—therefore will I*  
*not fear, though the earth be removed, and though*  
*the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.*

**lvi. 4;** *In God have I put my trust: I will not fear what*  
*flesh can do unto me. Well therefore may we, may*  
*the whole world, in consideration of our being*  
*under so good a Governor, be excited to joy and*

**xlvi. 1, 2;** *jubilation with the Psalmist; O clap your hands,*  
*all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of*  
*triumph: for the Lord most high is terrible; he is*

**xvii. 10,** *a great King over all the earth. Say among the*  
**11.** *nations, that the Lord reigneth; the world also shall*  
*be established, that it shall not be moved; he shall*

*judge the people righteously; let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, &c. Let the floods clap their hands, let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.* Or with those in the Revelation; *Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour unto him.* All the world hath exceeding reason not only to be content, but to rejoice and triumph in being subject to such a Governor, so able, so willing to maintain peace, good order, and equity therein: so that we also are obliged to bless and thank God, that he condescends so far, and vouchsafes to undertake the tuition and oversight of the world; obeying the Psalmist's exhortation; *The Lord, saith he, hath prepared his throne in heaven, and his kingdom ruleth over all: therefore, Bless the Lord, ye his angels—Bless the Lord, all his hosts—Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion; imitating herein those Elders in the Revelation; who say, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken unto thee thy great power, and hast reigned.* They who imagine the world is not governed at all, but that with unloosed reins it runneth on at random, are very foolish: but more such are they, who wish it to be so, and in their desires depose God from his throne; for they do wish for anarchy and confusion in their country, instead of the most excellent establishment and order, maintained by the wisest and ablest government. That good Emperor was better advised, and better affected, who said, *What good*

SERM.  
XI.Ps. xcvi.  
8, 9.Rev. xix. 6,  
7.Ps. ciii. 19,  
20, 22.

Rev. xi. 17.

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*were it for me to live in a world void of a Deity and Providence? and, Why should I desire to continue in such a casual jumble and rout of things<sup>1</sup>?*

The world, he well supposed, Divine governance being excluded, would be a strange, disorderly, and uncomfortable place to abide in. And old Socrates, in the *Phædon*, discoursing about his departure hence, comforts himself in that, as he hoped, he was going thither, where the gods did preside with a nearer inspection and a more apparent influence. These were worthy desires and noble hopes proceeding from natural reason and moral virtue in such persons; but much more reason and much greater obligation have we to be satisfied with, and to comfort ourselves in the assurance, that all things, even at present here, are moderated by a superintendency far more equal and more propitious than they could imagine or hope. These and such like practical uses the belief and consideration of God's sovereign authority and dominion do afford.

II. The belief and consideration of God's immense and uncontrollable power is also of very great importance and influence upon practice.

I It serveth to beget in us a due awe and dread of God: considering God's other attributes may breed in us a high esteem and hearty love of God; but the consideration of his power is that which naturally and reasonably produceth a great fear of him: he is most amiable for his goodness, and in regard to his wisdom greatly venerable;

<sup>1</sup> Τί μοι ζῆν ἐν κόσμῳ κενῷ θεῶν, ἢ προνοίας κενῷ;—M. Ant. II. § 11.

Τί καὶ ἐπιθυμῶ εἰκαίῃ συγκρίματι, καὶ φρυμῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἐνδιατρίβειν;  
—VI. § 10.

but his power, arming the rest, renders him exceedingly terrible. *Hear ye this*, it is said in the prophet Jeremiah, *O foolish people, and without understanding; Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which hath placed the sand for the bounds of the sea? &c. and, Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might: who would not fear thee, O thou King of nations? and, I will shew you, saith our Saviour, whom ye should fear; Fear him, who after he hath killed* *μετὰ τὸ ἀποκτείνειν* (or who beside killing) *hath power to cast into hell; I say unto you, Fear him: great reason he had so earnestly to inculcate that admonition, the case being so apparent and so important.*

2 This point doth consequently in high measure dissuade and deter us from sin, implying the extreme folly in committing it, and the inevitable mischief following it. The consideration of God's other attributes infer it to be great baseness and stupidity to oppose or displease God, but the consideration of this demonstrateth it to be infinite madness to do so. For to wrong, dishonour, and displease him, that is so good and beneficent to us, is great disingenuity and unworthiness; to swerve from his advice and direction, who is only and perfectly wise, is highly vain and unreasonable; but for so feeble and impotent things as we are to contest with and withstand, to provoke and offend Omnipotency, (that which with infinite ease can defeat and subdue us, can depress us into misery, can crush us into nothing,) is most palpably the top of insolent wildness. It is Moses's argument, whereby he presseth obedience to his law;

SERM.  
XI.Jer. v. 21,  
22;

x. 6, 7.

Luke xii. 5.

SERM. *Circumcise therefore, saith he, the foreskin of your*  
 XI. *heart, and be no more stiffnecked; for the Lord your*

Deut. x. 16,  
 17.

*God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great*  
*God, and a mighty, and a terrible. It is no less an*

i Cor. x. 22. *inepation, that of St Paul; Do we provoke the*  
*Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he? And*  
*God himself in Job useth the like scheme of*

Job xl. 9; *speech; Hast thou an arm like God? and canst*  
*thou thunder with a voice like him? If thou art as*

*strong, if thou hast such an arm, then mayest thou*  
*perhaps dare to contend with him, and adventure*  
*to provoke him: but if thou nowise art his match,*  
*if thou art infinitely short of him in strength, how*  
*vain and rash a thing is it for thee to defy him*  
*thus, to enter with him into the lists, to strive and*  
*grapple with him! to do as the sinner in Job is*  
 xv. 25. *expressed doing; He stretcheth out his hand against*  
*God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.*

*All presumptuous sinning is described and repre-*  
*sented in Scripture as a comparing, and, in effect,*  
*preferring our power and force in regard to the*  
*power of God; or as a tempting God, and chal-*  
*lenging him to battle; or as an actual coping,*  
*contention, and fighting with him: sinners, as*  
*such, are styled the adversaries of God, and rebels*  
*against him; such as rise up, and lift up them-*  
*selves, and raise their hand against him; which*  
*doth either imply in them a more than gigantic*  
*pride and arrogance, in overvaluing their own*  
*power and undervaluing the power of God, (which*  
*doth also involve infidelity, and disbelief of God's*  
*omnipotence; for he who believeth that, cannot*  
*take himself for God's match, or dare to struggle*

with him;) or it argueth a most strange inconsiderateness and vanity, in presuming, at so infinite a disadvantage, without any ground of confidence, without any hope of success, to oppose God's will and power. Οὐ δηναιὸς, ὃς ἀθανάτοις μάχοιτο: *He is not long lived, who fighteth with the immortals*, old Homer<sup>r</sup> could tell us; the same which the Prophet says; *Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!* Nothing, indeed, can be more reasonable, than that advice of the Preacher; *Contend not with him that is mightier than thou:* which in this case in effect is the same with this; Do not, by sinning, offend or provoke God.

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3 Whence likewise the consideration of this point may dispose us to weigh our counsels, and thereupon not to adventure upon any unwarrantable resolution or design; there being so apparent reason to despair of success, an insuperable power being always ready to obstruct and cross us in the carriage of such designs, with whatever cunning laid, or backed with whatever might; for hence those sayings in Scripture are manifestly verified:

*There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord:* and, *No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper:* and, *He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered?*

Prov. xxi.  
30.  
Isai. liv. 17.  
Job ix. 4.  
Num. xiv.  
41.  
Ps. lxxvi. 3,  
7.

4 It also likewise serveth to depress in us all confidence in ourselves, and in all other things, as to any security in them or succour from them: for all things in the world, though they conspire and combine together all their forces, will be altogether unable to support us, to assist us, to defend us

<sup>r</sup> [Π. v. 407.]



SERM.  
XI.

Prov. xi.  
21;  
xvi. 5.

Deut.  
xxxii. 39.  
Job x. 7.  
1 Sam. ii. 6.

Ps. xxxiii.  
16; cxlvi. 3.  
Isai. xxxvi.  
6.

against the Divine power, or indeed without it; they being all, otherwise than as maintained by him, infinitely feeble and frail: *Though hand join in hand*, (that is, notwithstanding the conjunction of all powers whatever,) *the wicked shall not be unpunished*, saith the Wise Man: and, *I kill*, saith God, *and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there anything that can deliver out of my hand*: and, *No king is saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; a horse is a vain thing for safety.*

5 It therefore also may be of a special efficacy to quell and mortify in us the vices of pride, haughtiness, arrogance, self-will, stubbornness, and contumacy; since contemplating the power of God we cannot but perceive ourselves to be very pitiful, impotent, and insignificant things; who without permission cannot effect anything; who cannot expect in any case to have our will; who have continually curbs in our mouths, and manacles on our hands; so that we cannot say or do anything, cannot so much as stir, or endeavour anything,

James iv. 6.

Isai. ii. 11;  
xiii. 11;  
xxiv. 21.

Job xl. 11,  
12; xxxviii.  
15.

Ps. xviii.  
27.  
Isai. xlii.  
9.

without check or control; being under a predominant force, which always resisteth the proud; under the power of him who hath said, *The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down*; whose character and peculiar work it is to behold every one that is proud, and to abase him; to cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and to lay low the haughtiness of the terrible; to break the high arm, and to bring down the high looks; and to stain the pride of all glory. Whence there is all the reason in the world that we should obey St Peter's injunc-

tion, to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. SERM.  
XI.

6 The consideration of God's omnipotence serveth to breed and nourish faith in God, as to the certain performance of his word and promises : for let the accomplishment of them be to appearance never so difficult or improbable, yet he is able to perform them, and will therefore do it. *The Strength of Israel*, as Samuel said, *will not lie, nor repent* : 1 Pet. v. 6.  
and, *Hath he said it, and shall he not do it ? or hath he spoken it, and shall he not make it good ?* 1 Sam. xv.  
said Balaam, inspiredly : and, *The Lord of hosts*, saith Isaiah, *hath purposed it, and who shall disannul it ? His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back ?* and, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure ; I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass ; I have purposed, I will also do it : and, My word that goeth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please ; it shall prosper unto the thing whereunto I sent it : and, The counsel of the Lord*, Num. xxiii.  
saith the Psalmist, *standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations : Let all the earth fear the Lord ; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him ; for he spake, and it was done ; he commanded, and it stood fast : and, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* Isai. xiv.  
So doth God assert his immutable fidelity, and considering his indefectible power doth assure us, that we may rely upon his word ; and the doing so is very grateful and acceptable to God ; for it was that virtue for which Abraham is so highly commended and so richly rewarded : *He did not*, Isai. xl. 8.  
saith St Paul of him, *stagger at the promise of God* Ps. xxxiii.  
11, 8.  
13.  
Prov. xix.  
21.  
Jer. iv. 28.  
Mark xiii.  
31.  
Job xxiii.  
Rom. iv.  
20, 21.

SERM.  
XI.

1 John v.  
10.

*through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able to perform: to do otherwise is very displeasing and offensive to God; for we do thereby either doubt of his veracity, so, as St John saith, Making him a liar; or we disbelieve his power, and make him impotent in our conceit; which to do is high injury to God, and detestable sacrilege. Hence also,*

7 Particularly this consideration may produce and cherish our faith in the sufficiency of God's providence, and may induce us entirely to rely upon it. For if God be omnipotent, then is he easily able to supply us in all our needs, to relieve us in all our straits, to protect us from all danger and mischief; and being able, he will not fail to do it, since his goodness also disposeth him thereto, and his word engageth him; he having declared himself to be the patron, protector, and benefactor of the needy; he having promised to help, relieve, and comfort those who seek and cry unto him.

Ps. cxlv.  
cxlvi.  
cxlvii. &c.

Distrust in God's providence is always grounded in the disbelief either of God's goodness or of his power; in supposing him either to be unwilling or unable to do us good; and that it is commonly grounded on the latter, the Israelites' constant behaviour in the wilderness (representing the ordinary conversation of men in this world) doth inform us; who conceived their needs greater, than that God was able to supply them; their enemies stronger, than that by God's assistance they could withstand or subdue them; the obstacles to their proceedings such, that God himself could not carry them through them; for, as the Psalmist representeth

their behaviour and discourse, *They spake against God, saying, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?* and that from their conceiting God unable to convey them through all dangers and difficulties, to render them victorious over the tall men and the fenced cities of Canaan, they, notwithstanding God's presence with them and ready aid, desponded in heart, and murmured, and provoked God, and in consequence of such misbehaviour forfeited obtaining the rest propounded to them, many passages in the story do shew us. We in practice do commonly follow them, notwithstanding the many experiments of God's wonderful power and goodness, frequently suspecting that God cannot supply our necessities or satisfy our desires; whence we are either overborne with anxiety, and become disconsolate, or have recourse for succour and relief to other aids; deserting God, as the Prophet intimates, when he (withal declaring the offence God taketh at such miscarriages, with the guilt and mischief we thereby incur) pronounceth thus: *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, &c.* Whence our Saviour took it ill of his disciples, and rebuked them, when even in the most imminent and affrighting dangers they gave place to fear or doubt; as when in a great tempest, the ship being even covered with waves, they being afraid, cried out, *Lord, save us, we perish*; he said unto them,

SERM.  
XI.Ps. lxxviii.  
19, 20.Deut. i. 28.  
Num. xiv.  
9.  
Heb. iii. 18.Jer. xvii. 5.  
6.Matt. viii.  
24, 25, 26.

SERM.  
XL

Τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι; *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* And when St Peter, walking upon waves, and beginning to sink, his heart misgiving, in like manner cried out, *Lord, save me;* our Lord also reproves him with an, Ὀλιγόπιστε, εἰς τί ἐδίστασας; *O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?* Whence we both learn, that it is our want or weakness of faith which makes us in our greatest needs ready to sink, and that it is not excusable for us in the extremity of danger to doubt of God's protection and succour. Further,

8 This consideration affordeth comfort and encouragement unto us in the undertaking and prosecution of honest and prudent enterprises, giving us to hope confidently for success, how difficult or dangerous soever they appear unto us; all difficulties and improbabilities vanishing before that Omnipotency which abetteth and backeth such endeavours; the which is by faith imparted and appropriated unto us; so that we, with St Paul, are able to do all things by God strengthening us. Nothing is so high or difficult (if just and reasonable) which a resolute faith in the Divine power cannot easily surmount and achieve: a word, seconded therewith, can transplant trees, and transfer mountains any whither: *If ye, saith our Lord, have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed hence to yonder place, and it shall be removed: Ye may say to this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou planted in the sea, and it shall obey you; καὶ οὐδὲν ἀδυνατήσει ὑμῖν, and there is nothing,* adds our Saviour, *which shall be impossible unto you;* for, as he saith again, *All things are possible to him that be-*

Matt. xvii.  
20.  
Luke x. 19;  
xvii. 6.  
Mark xi.  
23.

Mark ix.  
23.

lieveth; that is, unto him who relieth upon the Divine power; for that the faith he speaks of referreth thither, appeareth by several like passages in the Gospel; as for instance in that, where to the blind men imploring his relief our Lord puts this question: *Do ye believe that I can do this?* and they answering, *Yes, Lord*; he thereupon replies, *According to your faith be it done unto you.* In contemplation of this power, we may, if our duty or good reason do call us forth, how small or weak soever in ourselves, how destitute soever of defensive arms or offensive weapons, naked and unarmed, with a sling and a stone, go out against the biggest and best-armed Philistine, nothing doubtful of victory; it will be enough, if we can say with David, *I come unto thee in the name of the Lord of hosts*; that is, confiding in his powerful help, as my invincible weapon and defence. But so much for this particular.

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Matt. ix.  
28, 29.

1 Sam. xvii.  
45.

III. That notion of the word *Almighty*, which implieth God's being universal proprietary and possessor of all things, hath likewise many good uses; we shall only name them, without enlarging upon them: we thence learn,

1 That we ourselves are not our own, and therefore ought to submit ourselves with content and patience to God's disposal; for that, as it is in the Gospel, God may do what he pleaseth with his own. Whence also we are bound, as St Paul enjoineth us, *To glorify God with our bodies and spirits, which are God's.*

Matt. xx.  
15.

1 Cor. vi.  
20.

2 That also therefore we ought to be content with that portion of accommodations here which God alloweth us; for that since everything is his,

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we can claim nothing to ourselves; all we have doth proceed from mere liberality and bounty.

3 The same reason obligeth us to be satisfied, whenever Providence withdraweth what it did afford us the enjoyment of; for God doth never so communicate anything, as to divest himself of the paramount title and propriety therein; all things have an immutable relation to him as Lord, and cannot be alienated from him; whence he may justly, when he pleaseth, recall or resume them into his hand.

Job i. 21.

4 Yea, hence we are obliged to be heartily thankful for all we ever have or enjoy; for that nothing is upon any account ours, or can be due to us from him; all proceeding from pure kindness and goodness.

5 We are hence obliged carefully to manage and employ all which is put into our hands for his interest and service; as honest tenants and faithful stewards, making just returns and improvements; not embezzling nor abusing any of his goods committed to us.

6 Lastly, we may learn hence to be humble and sober; not to be conceited or elevated in mind, or apt to glory, in regard to any thing we have; since we have nothing that we can justly esteem or properly call our own.

IV. That sense, according to which the word doth signify God's containing all things by his immense presence, is also of most excellent use and influence upon our practice. We thereby may learn with what care and circumspection, with what reverence and modesty, with what innocence and integrity, we ought always, and in all places,

to manage our conversation and behaviour; since SERM. XI.  
 we continually do think, and speak, and act in the  
 immediate presence and under the inspection of  
 God; *Whose eyes are upon the ways of man, and* Job xxxiv. 21.  
*he seeth all his goings; Who searcheth and trieth* Ps. cxxxix. 3, 13, &c.  
*our hearts, and possesseth our reins; Who encom-* Jer. xvii. 10.  
*passeth our path, and is acquainted with all our* Heb. iv. 13.  
*ways; To whose eyes all things are naked and* Ps. xc. 8.  
*dissected;* according to the significant and empha- Prov. xx. 27.  
 tical expressions of Scripture. Did we stand in  
 the sight of our king, we should not dare to behave  
 ourselves rudely and indecently; were a virtuous  
 person conscious of our doings, we should be  
 ashamed to do any base or filthy thing; the over-  
 sight of a grave or a wise person would restrain  
 us from practising vanities and impertinencies:  
 how much more should the glorious majesty of the  
 most wise and holy God, being ever present to all  
 our thoughts, words, and actions, if duly consi-  
 dered and reflected upon, keep us within awe and  
 compass! how can we, if we remember that we  
 abide always in a temple sanctified by God's pre-  
 sence, not contain ourselves in a careful and devout  
 posture of soul\*!

This consideration also prompteth us to fre-  
 quent addresses of prayer, thanksgiving, and all  
 kind of adoration toward God: for all reason dic-  
 tateth it to be unseemly to be in his presence with  
 our back turned unto him, without demonstrations  
 of regard and reverence to him, without answering  
 him when he speaketh to us; that is, without

\* Πᾶς οὖν καὶ τόπος ἱερὸς τῷ ὄντι, ἐν ᾧ τὴν ἐπίνοιαν Θεοῦ λαμβά-  
 νομεν, καὶ χρόνος. —Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 856.  
 Vid. p. 851.]



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corresponding to the invitations which he frequently by his providence maketh to us, of conversing with him, of seeking his favour, and imploring his help, and returning thanks for his mercies.

V. Lastly, the consideration that God doth uphold all things, and consequently ourselves, in being, may upon several good accounts be influential upon our practice; particularly it may powerfully deter us from offending and displeasing him; for put case our life, our livelihood, all the conveniences and comforts of our being, should wholly depend upon the bounty and pleasure of any person, should we not be very wary and fearful to affront, or injure, or displease such a person? It is in the highest degree so with us in respect to God; and why are we so inconsiderate, that the same reason hath not the same effect upon us?

This consideration also should mind us how infinitely we are obliged to the goodness of God, who when he may by the bare withdrawing his conservative influence utterly destroy us, and suffer us to fall to nothing, doth, notwithstanding our many provocations, the many neglects and injuries he receiveth from us, continually preserve us in his hand, and every moment imparteth a new being to us. For which, and all his infinite mercies and favours toward us, let us for ever yield unto him all thanks and praise. *Amen.*

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Maker of Heaven and Earth.

SERMON XII.

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ACTS IV. 24.

*O Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.*

IT may be demanded, why besides that of SERM.  
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*Almighty*, no other attribute of God is expressed in our Creed? why, for instance, the perfections of infinite wisdom and goodness are therein omitted? I answer,

1 That all such perfections are included in the notion of a God, whom when we profess to believe, we consequently do ascribe them to him implicitly. For he that should profess to believe in God, not acknowledging those perfections, would be inconsistent and contradictory to himself: *Deum negaret*, as Tertullian speaks, *auferendo quod Dei est*<sup>a</sup>; *He would deny God by withdrawing what belongs to God.*

2 The title *παντοκράτωρ*, as implying God's universal providence in the preservation and government of the world, doth also involve or infer all Divine perfections displayed therein; all that glorious majesty and excellency, for which he is with highest respect to be honoured and

<sup>a</sup> Adv. Marc. Lib. 1. cap. III. [Opp. p. 367 A]

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XII. worshipped by us, which added to the name of God doth determine what God we mean, such as doth in all perfection excel, and with it doth govern the world.

3 I may add, thirdly, That the doctrine of God's universal providence being not altogether so evident to natural light as those attributes discovered in the making of the world, (more having doubted thereof, and disputed against it with much more plausibility,) it was therefore convenient to add it, as a matter of faith clearly and fully (as we did shew) attested unto by Divine revelation. So much may suffice to remove such a scruple concerning the fulness and sufficiency of the Creed in that particular. I proceed;

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This clause is one of those which was of later times inserted into the Creed; none of the most ancient expositors thereof (Austin, Ruffin, Maximus Taurinensis, Chrysologus, &c.) taking any notice thereof. But Irenæus, Tertullian, and other most ancient writers, in their rules of faith, exhibit their sense thereof, and the Confessions of all general councils (the Nicene, and those after it) express it. And there is great reason for it; not only thereby to disavow and decry those prodigious errors of Marcion, Manichæus, and other such heretics, which did then ascribe the creation of the world (or of some part thereof, seeming to their fancy less good and perfect) to another God, or Principle, inferior in worth and goodness to that God which was revealed in the Gospel; or did opinionate two Principles, (not distinct only,

but contrary one to the other;) from one whereof good things did proceed, from the other bad things were derived. SERM.  
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The creation of the world (which the holy confessors of Christ do here ascribe unto God) is that peculiarly august and admirable work, by which we learn that he is, and in good measure what he is; by which, I say, the existence of God is most strongly demonstrated, and in which his Divine perfections are most conspicuously displayed; which is the prime foundation of his authority over the world, and consequently the chief ground of all natural Religion; of our just subjection, our reasonable duty, our humble devotion toward him: the title, Creator of heaven and earth, is that also, which most especially characterizes and distinguishes the God whom we believe and adore, from all false and fictitious deities; for, as the Psalmist sings, *All the gods of the nations are but idols, but the Lord made the heavens:* and, *Thou, prayest Hezekiah, art the God, thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth, thou hast made heaven and earth:* and, *The gods, saith the Prophet Jeremiah, that have not made the heavens and the earth, they shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens:* and, *We preach unto you, said St Paul to the ignorant Lycaonians, that ye should turn from those vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth.* It is therefore a point, which worthily hath been inserted into all creeds, and confessions of our faith, as a necessary object of our belief; and it is, indeed, a subject no less wholesome and fruitful, than high and noble;

Ps. xcvi. 5.

2 Kings xix. 15, 19.

Jer. x. 11.

Acts xiv. 15;  
xvii. 24.

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deserving that we employ our best thoughts and most careful attention upon it: to the commemoration thereof God consecrated the great sabbatical festivity among his ancient people; nor should even the consideration of the great work concerning our Redemption abolish the remembrance of it: to confer some advantage thereto, we shall now so discourse thereon, as first to propound some observations explicative thereof, and conducing to our information about it, then to apply the consideration thereof to practice.

We may first observe, that the ancient Hebrews, having, as it seems, in their language no one word properly signifying the world, or universal frame and complex of things created, (that system, as the Author *de Mundo*<sup>b</sup> defines it, *Consisting of heaven and earth, and the natures contained in them,*) did for to express it use a collection of its chief parts, (chief, absolutely in themselves, or such in respect to us,) the heaven and the earth, adding sometimes, because of the word earth its ambiguity, the sea also: yea sometimes, for fuller explication, subjoining to heaven its host, to earth its fulness, to the sea its contents: so, *In six days the Lord made heaven and earth*, saith Moses: and, *Do not I fill heaven and earth?* saith the Lord, (in Jeremiah:) and, *It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail*, saith our Saviour: and, *God*, saith St Paul, *who made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth*; (where the

Gen. i. 1.  
Exod. xx.

11.  
Jer. xxiii.  
24.

Luke xvi.  
17.

Acts xvii.  
24.

Ps. lxi.  
34.

<sup>b</sup> Κόσμος μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις περιεχομένων φύσεων.—Cap. II.

Vid. Lips. Phys. Stoic. II. 7.

world and all things therein do signify the same SERM. XII.  
 with heaven and earth; he first uses the word *world*, which the Greek language affordeth, then Neh. ix. 6. 2 Kings  
 adds the circumlocution, whereby the Hebrews did xix. 15. Isai. xlii.  
 express it.) By heaven and earth therefore we <sup>5</sup>  
 are, I say, to understand those two regions, superior and inferior, into which the whole system of things is divided, together with all the beings that do reside in them, or do belong unto them, or are comprehended by them; as we see fully expressed in our text, and elsewhere; particularly with utmost distinction by the Angel in the Apocalypse: who swears *By him that liveth for ever, who created the heaven, and the things that are therein, and the earth, with the things that therein are, and the sea, with the things therein.* Rev. x. 6.

By heaven then is understood all the superior region encompassing the globe of earth, and from it on all sides extended to a distance unconceivably vast and spacious, with all its parts, and furniture, and inhabitants; not only such things in it as are visible and material, but also those which are immaterial and invisible; so we are plainly taught by St Paul: *By him, saith he, were created all things, which are in heaven, and which are in earth, both those that are visible, and those that are invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him:* that is, not only the material and sensible parts, or contents of heaven, (those bright and beautiful lamps exposed to our view, with the fluid matter, in which they may be conceived to float or swim,) but those beings of a more pure and refined substance, and thence indiscernible Col. i. 16.

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- to our sense, however eminent in nature, mighty in power, exalted in dignity, whose ordinary residence and proper habitation (their ἴδιον οἰκητήριον as St Jude termeth it) is in those superior regions; in that they are courtiers and domestic officers of God, (whose throne, and special presence, or the place where he more peculiarly and amply discovereth himself, and displayeth his glory, is in heaven,) attending upon him, and ministering to him; encircling his throne, as it is in the Revelation, and always, as our Saviour telleth us, beholding his face; even these all were made by God: the time<sup>c</sup>, indeed, when, and the manner how those invisible sublime creatures were made, is not in the History of the Creation, or elsewhere manifestly expressed, (because perhaps it doth exceed the capacity, or doth not suit the condition of man to understand them<sup>d</sup>; or because it doth not much concern us, or not much conduceth to our edification to know them:) but that they were made by God, and that when we call God the Maker of heaven, they are comprehended, as the creatures of God dwelling there, is evidently declared in Scripture: for beside the fore-mentioned clear and full place of St Paul, the angel fore-cited in the Revelation saith, that *God created the heaven, καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, and the things in it*; and in our text, it is said that *God made heaven and all*
- Heb. i. 14.  
Dan. vii.  
10.  
Ps. ciii.  
21.
- Rev. v. 11.  
Matt.  
xviii. 10.
- Rev. x. 6.
- Mark xii.  
25;  
xiii. 32.

<sup>c</sup> The Greek Fathers commonly (and St Hierome after them) conceived that they were made before the creation of this material world: St Austin thinks them meant under *Fiat lux*. De Civ. Dei, xi. 9. [Opp. Tom. vii. col. 279 c. Cum enim dixit Deus, Fiat lux, et facta est lux; si recte in hac luce creatio intelligitur angelorum. . . .]

<sup>d</sup> Διὰ τὸ τοῖς εἰσαγομένοις ἐν καὶ νηπίοις κατὰ τὴν γνώσιν ἀνεπιτήδειον.—Bas. in Hexaem. Hom. i. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 5 c.]

things in it, πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, which plainly in-cludeth the Angels; if all things in it, then surely the Angels, who are often expressed to be in heaven, being, indeed, the principal and most considerable things therein<sup>o</sup>: and, *Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host*, (pray the Levites in Nehemiah,) where, according to the Jews' notion, who say there are three heavens; *Cælum nubiferum*, or the firmament; *Cælum astriferum*, the starry heavens; *Cælum angeliferum*, or the heaven of heavens; where the Angels reside, the third heaven in St Paul; by the hosts of heaven, are meant the Angels: as also the hosts of God do seem to signify in the 103d Psalm; where it is said, *Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word; Bless ye the Lord, all his hosts, ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure*: whence they are termed *The sons of God*; as where in Job it is said, *There was a day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord*; and in several other places: and St Jude telleth us of the lapsed Angels, that they did not retain τὴν ἐαυτῶν ἀρχὴν, *their beginning*, or primitive state; wherefore they had a beginning, and whence could they have that, but from God; who alone is eternal, (*Who alone*, originally, intrinsically, and necessarily, *hath*, as St Paul saith, *immortality*; and consequently alone, (as Aristotle<sup>f</sup> by several arguments proveth against Plato,) *hath eternity*). The Angels also are subject to God's

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Neh. ix. 6.

2 Cor. xii.  
2.

Ps. ciii. 20,  
21.

Job ii. 1;  
xxxviii. 7.  
Ps. lxxxix.  
6;  
xxix. 1.

Jude 6.

1 Tim. vi.  
16.

<sup>o</sup> Φῶτα δεύτερα, τοῦ πρώτου φωτὸς ἀπαυγίσματα.—Greg. Naz. Orat. xlii. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 836 D.]

<sup>f</sup> Cf. de Cælo, Lib. I. cap. ult.



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&c.;

cxlviii. 5, 6.

jurisdiction and governance, which argueth their proceeding from him, and dependence upon him : in fine, the Psalmist reckons them among the works of God ; for having said, *Bless the Lord, ye his angels ;* and, *Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts ;* he recapitulating and concluding subjoins, *Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion :* and again, in the 148th Psalm, summoning all the creation to a consort of doxology, he begins with the heavens, then proceeds to the earth, making a very particular recitation of the chief parts and inhabitants belonging to each ; and in the first place mentioning the Angels, then the stars, then the heaven of heavens, he subjoineth the reason why they ought all to praise God : *Let them, saith he, praise the name of the Lord ; for he commanded, and they were created ; he hath also established them for ever and ever ; he hath made a decree, which shall not pass.* Thus we are by Divine revelation instructed concerning the existence and original of those heavenly invisible beings, to the knowledge of whom, that they are, what they are, whence they are, natural light could not reach ; although from the relics of primitive tradition even the Pagans themselves commonly in part did acknowledge this truth, calling all the inferior or secondary gods, whom they conceived to converse together happily, *ἐν τῷ ἀνωτάτῳ τόπῳ*, in the highest place above, as Aristotle saith<sup>s</sup>, in subjection to God, and attendance on him, the children of the Supreme God : Plato calls God, *Πατέρα καὶ Δημιουργ-*

<sup>s</sup> De Cosl. 1. 3. [Πάντες γὰρ ἄνθρωποι περὶ θεῶν ἔχουσι ὑπόληψιν, καὶ πάντες τὸν ἀνωτάτῳ τῷ θεῷ τὸν τόπον ἀποδιδάσκει, καὶ βάρβαροι καὶ Ἕλληνες.] Cf. Pol. 1. [2.]

γὰρ, the *Father and Framer* of them all<sup>h</sup>, according (as he avoweth himself) to ancient tradition. And thus concerning those beings piety doth oblige us to believe and profess, that God is their Maker, it especially conducing to his glory to believe, that he is the author of their sublime natures, and donor of those excellent properties, with which they are endowed, and wherein they so far surpass all other beings.

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As for all other things both in heaven and earth, the material frame of the visible world, with all its parts compacted together in so fair, so fit, so firm and stable an order, they (as we have sometime sufficiently discoursed) even to natural understanding speak themselves to have been produced by a most wise, most powerful, most beneficent author, that is, by God ; the which is confirmed by innumerable testimonies of Holy Writ, so evident and obvious, that we need not to cite them : and to thus much the generality of mankind hath always consented ; as also the most and best reputed philosophers did in general terms avow it, acknowledging God the Author and Builder of the world.

But there is one particular, wherein they seem unanimously to have dissented from what Christian piety inclines us to acknowledge, as most suitable to the divine perfection and majesty ; which concerns the origin of that matter, of which corporeal things do subsist. For even Plato himself, who so positively doth assert the world to have been framed by God<sup>i</sup>, is yet conceived (I speak so dubiously,

<sup>h</sup> In Tim. [41 A. Θεοὶ θεῶν, ὧν ἐγὼ δημιουργὸς πατήρ τε.]

<sup>i</sup> Tim. [28 c.]

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because his writings about this point are somewhat obscure, and, as Justin Martyr<sup>k</sup> proves, inconsistent with themselves) to suppose the matter of things to be eternal; he ascribing only to God the forming and disposing it into a good order, answerable to some patterns pre-existent in his wise understanding; even as a good artist doth out of an unshapen lump of stuff frame a handsome piece of work, conformable to some idea (or image) preconceived in his fancy<sup>l</sup>: so that he represents God, rather as a Builder out of prepared materials, than as a Creator of the world. *Socrates and Plato*, saith Plutarch, *did suppose three principles of things, God, matter, idea: God is the mind; Matter the first subject of generation and corruption; Idea an incorporeal subsistence in the conceptions of God<sup>m</sup>*. Anaxagoras also, as the same author<sup>n</sup>, and Aristotle<sup>o</sup> before him, telleth us, did assert two principles; the one passive, the matter, consisting of an infinite number of small particles like to one another in shape; the other active, understanding, which ranged those

<sup>k</sup> Cohort. ad Græc. [capp. vi. vii. Opp. pp. 11, 12.]

<sup>l</sup> Ut igitur faber, eum quid ædificaturus est, non ipse facit materiam, sed ea utitur quæ sit parata, fictorque item cera; sic isti providentiæ divinæ materiam præsto esse oportuit, non quam ipse faceret, sed quam haberet paratam.—Cic. apud Lact. Instit. ii. 9.

Quibus enim oculis animi intueri potuit vester Plato fabricam illam tanti operis; qua construi a Deo, atque ædificari mundum facit?—Cic. de Nat. Deor. [i. 8, 19.]

<sup>m</sup> De Placit. i. 3. [Σωκράτης—καὶ Πλάτων—τρεῖς ἀρχάς, τὸν Θεόν, τὴν ὕλην, τὴν ἰδέαν. ἔστι δὲ ὁ Θεὸς ὁ νοῦς, ὕλη δὲ τὸ ὑποκείμενον πρῶτον γενέσει καὶ φθορᾷ, ἰδέα δ' οὐσία ἀσώματος ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι καὶ ταῖς φαντασίαις τοῦ Θεοῦ.—Opp. Tom. ix. p. 480. ed. Reisk.]

<sup>n</sup> [—Ὁμοιομερείας αὐτὰς ἐκάλεσε (Ἀναξαγόρας) καὶ ἀρχάς τῶν ὄντων ἀπεφώνητο· καὶ τὰς μὲν ὁμοιομερείας, ὕλην, τὸ δὲ ποιοῦν αἴτιον, τὸν νοῦν, τὸν τὰ πάντα διαταξάμενον.—Ibid. p. 474.]

<sup>o</sup> Ἀναξαγόρας τε γὰρ μηχανῇ χρῆται τῷ νῷ πρὸς τὴν κοσμοποιίαν.—Met. i. 4.

troops of little bodies into order : to the same effects Pythagoras his conceits, though expressed with much obscurity, are reduced. Thales his opinion was in effect the same, *Who, as Cicero telleth us, said, that water was the principle of things, and God that mind which fashioned all things out of water*<sup>p</sup>. The Stoics also were of the same opinion : *It seems to them, saith Laertius in Zeno's Life, that there are two principles of all things, the agent, and the patient ; that the patient is the matter void of qualities, but the agent, reason which is therein, that is, God*<sup>q</sup>. Tertullian against Hermogenes saith, that *He did take from the Stoics to place matter with God ; which matter did always exist, being neither born nor made, and nowise having either beginning or end, out of which afterward the Lord made all things*<sup>r</sup> : and *Come now, saith the same Father in his Book against the Valentinians, let the Pythagoreans learn, let the Stoics acknowledge, and even Plato himself, whence matter, whom they would have unmade, did draw its both origin and substance toward all this structure of the world*<sup>s</sup>.

<sup>p</sup> Thales aquam dixit esse initium rerum : Deum autem eam mentem, quæ ex aqua cuncta fingeret.—De Nat. Deor. [I. 10, 25.]

<sup>q</sup> Δοκεῖ δὲ αὐτοῖς ἀρχὰς εἶναι τῶν ὄλων δύο, τὸ ποιῶν καὶ τὸ πάσχον. τὸ μὲν οὖν πάσχον εἶναι τὴν ἀποιον οὐσίαν τὴν ὕλην, τὸ δὲ ποιῶν τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ λόγον τὸν Θεόν.—[VII. 1. 68.]

Vid. Lips. Phys. Stoic. [I. 4.] Sen. Ep. LXV. [24.] [Dicunt, ut scis, Stoici nostri, duo esse in rerum natura, ex quibus omnia fiant: causam et materiam. Materia jacet iners, res ad omnia parata, cessatura, si nemo moveat: causa autem, id est ratio, materiam format, et quocunque vult versat: ex illa varia opera producit.]

<sup>r</sup> Sumpsit a Stoicis materiam cum Domino ponere, quæ et ipsa semper fuerit, neque nata, neque facta, nec initium habens omnino, nec finem, ex qua Dominus omnia postea fecerit.—Cap. I. [Opp. p. 233 c.]

<sup>s</sup> Age nunc, discant Pythagorici, agnoscant Stoici, Plato ipse, unde materiam, quam innatam volunt, et originem et substantiam

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Yea, Aristotle tells us, that generally all natural philosophers before him did conceive, and did assume it for a principle, that nothing was made out of nothing, or that every thing produced had necessarily some pre-existent matter, out of which it was produced : *It is*, saith he, *the common opinion of naturalists, that nothing can be made out of nothing ; and, That it is impossible, that anything should proceed from nothing, all that have studied about nature do consent*<sup>t</sup> : which principle Aristotle himself not only admits, but extends further, affirming it impossible that anything should be produced out of matter not predisposed to admit the form which is to be produced ; Οὐδὲ γίνεται ὅτιοῦν ἐξ ὅτουοῦν, *Neither can*, saith he, *everything be made of everything*<sup>u</sup>, *but out of some subject fitted thereto, (or susceptible thereof,) as animals, and plants out of their seed*<sup>x</sup>. Which principles deduced from the observing natural effects, or works of art performed always by alterations, additions, subtractions, or transpositions of some matter subjacent, we may safely, in respect only to such kinds of effects, proceeding in the ordinary course of nature,

traxerit in omnem hanc struem mundi.—Cap. xv. [Opp. p. 257 A.]

Vid. Athenag. Leg. [cap. xv.]

<sup>t</sup> Διὰ τὸ ὑπολαμβάνειν τὴν κοινὴν δόξαν τῶν φυσικῶν εἶναι ἀληθῆ, ὡς οὐ γινόμενον οὐδενὸς ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος.—Τὸ μὲν ἐκ μὴ ὄντων γίνεσθαι, ἀδύνατον· περὶ γὰρ ταύτης ὁμογνωμονοῦσι τῆς δόξης πάντες οἱ περὶ φύσεως.—Phys. Auscult. i. 4. §§ 2, 3. Vid. cap. 8. et de Gener. et Corrup. i. 3. et Metaph. i. cap. 1, 3.

<sup>u</sup> Phys. i. 9 [?]

<sup>x</sup> Ἄει ἐστὶ τι ὃ ὑπόκειται, ἐξ οὗ γίγνεται τὸ γινόμενον, οἷον τὰ φυτὰ, καὶ τὰ ζῶα ἐκ σπέρματος.—Phys. i. [7.]

Erit aliquid, quod aut ex nihilo oriatur, aut in nihilum subito occidat ; quis hoc physicus dixit unquam?—Cic. de Divin. ii. [16, 37.]

admit; allowing no natural agent, no created artificer, sufficient to produce anything without some matter or subject aptly qualified and prepared to receive its influence; but from hence to conclude universally, that every action possible doth require a matter pre-existent, or a predisposed subject, is nowise reasonable: because such a thing doth not usually according to the course of nature happen; because there is no cause obvious that can perform so much; because we are not acquainted with the manner of way of doing such a thing, that therefore the thing is in itself absolutely impossible, is no warrantable argumentation: no logic will allow us from particular experiments to establish general conclusions, especially such as do concern the determination of what is absolutely impossible; that must be fetched from abstracted notions of reason, not from singular appearances to sense: there may be, for all that we (we pitifully shortsighted creatures in this our dark state) can by any means know, agents of another sort, and powers in manner of efficacy much differing from all those which come within the narrow compass of our observation. Especially to imagine, that the Supreme Being, who made the world in a manner, whatever that manner were, incomprehensible, cannot himself act otherwise than we see these inferior things (not only infinitely lower in degree, but wholly different in nature) do act, is grossly vain and unreasonable: *It is impossible*, saith St Chrysostom well, *for man's nature by curious inquiry to penetrate the workmanship of God*<sup>γ</sup>. From sense or experience then,

<sup>γ</sup> Ἀδύνατον τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν φύσιν τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ δημιουργίαν περιεργάζεσθαι.—In Gen. Orat. II. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 7.]

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such conclusions cannot well be derived ; it assures us that some effects are possible, but cannot help us to determine what is impossible. Neither are there any certain principles of reason, from whence it may be collected, that it is impossible, that some substances should be totally produced *de novo*, or receive completely an existence, which they had not before : that no such principles are innate to our minds, (if, indeed, there be at all any innate principles, which some philosophers deny,) every man's experience can tell him : neither do these philosophers allege any such ; nor (as we before shewed) can any such be drawn from experience. If they say, the proposition is *αὐτόπιστος*, or evidently credible of itself, without any proof, it is a precarious and groundless assertion ; such as ought not to be admitted in any science, or any disceptation ; except they can shew, that the terms of these propositions, (or of the like equivalent ones,) A substance is producible altogether *de novo* ; A substance may exist, which did not exist ; Something may be produced out of nothing ; do involve a contradiction ; which it rather is evident they do not, there being nothing contained in the notion of substance inconsistent with such a producibility, or with novelty of existence, no more than there is in the notion of figure or of motion, which things no man hardly denies to receive a new existence. In fine, nothing is more reasonable than to confess, that our reason can nowise reach the extent of all powers and all possibilities ; and that we much, as St Chrysostom speaks, do transgress our measures and bounds, if we pretend to know what

things God is able to produce<sup>a</sup>, or how he doth produce any: *His works*, as Lactantius speaketh, *are seen with eyes; but how he made them, the mind itself cannot see*<sup>a</sup>. Those opinions therefore of the ancient philosophers, that the matter of the world (or of natural things) was eternal and necessarily pre-existent, and that there could be no creation out of nothing, were assumed altogether without any clear or sure foundation. We may say unto them, as our Lord did once say to the Sadducees, *Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God*. The poverty and narrowness of men's natural understanding, (not going usually beyond matters obvious to sense,) and their inability, by the meanness of their reason, to look up to the height of truth, did, as St Basil says, deceive them<sup>b</sup>. And that these opinions (revived and embraced by divers persons in our days) are false, and contrary to our faith, that in truth all the matter of things both could be, and really was created by God, may from several reasons appear.

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Matt. xxii.

29.

I It is often in general terms affirmed in Scripture, that God did make all things; all things in heaven and earth. Now it is unsafe, and never, without urgent reason allowable, to make

<sup>a</sup> [Μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς εἰγνωμοσύνης δεχόμεθα τὰ λεγόμενα, μὴ υπερβαίνοντες τὸ οἰκείον μέτρον, μηδὲ τὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς περιεργαζόμενοι.— Ut supra.]

Hoc est enim modum conditionis suæ transgredi, nec intelligere quousque homini liceat accedere.—Lact. [Inst. ii. 9.]

<sup>a</sup> Opera ipsius videntur oculis. Quomodo autem illa facerit, ne mente quidem videtur.—Ibid.

<sup>b</sup> Ἐξηπάτησεν αὐτοὺς τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ἡ πενία.—Οὐ δυναθῆναι διὰ λογισμῶν ταπεινότητα πρὸς τὸ ὕψος ἀπιδεῖν τῆς ἀληθείας.—Hexaem. Hom. β'. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 13 D. p. 14 A.]



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11, &c.;

iii. 22.

limitations or restrictions of universal propositions, especially of such as are frequently and constantly thus set down : and, like as St Paul somewhere discourses, because it is said in the Prophets, *Every one that believeth in him shall not be ashamed*; and, *Whosoever shall call upon the Lord shall be saved*; therefore both Jews and Greeks, in case of their belief and invocation of God, are capable of acceptance and salvation ; Οὐ γάρ ἐστι διαστολή, *For that there is no distinction* or exception made : so it being said universally and unlimitedly, that all things were made, and no reason appearing which compels to restrain that universality, therefore the matter of things was also made ; the matter being one thing, yea in the opinion of most philosophers, as well ancient as modern, the principal thing, the only substantial thing in nature ; all other things being only modes, affections, or relations thereof. Whence Aristotle<sup>c</sup> telleth us, that most of the first philosophers did affirm nothing at all really to be made, and nothing ever to be destroyed ; because matter did always subsist and abide the same, as if no other thing beside in nature had any being considerable. If God therefore did not produce matter itself, he could hardly be accounted author of anything

<sup>c</sup> Phys. 1. 8. [Ζητούντες γὰρ οἱ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν πρῶτοι τὴν ἀλήθειαν — φασὶν οὔτε γίνεσθαι τῶν ὄντων οὐδὲν, οὔτε φθεῖρεσθαι, διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον μὲν εἶναι γίγνεσθαι τὸ γιγνόμενον ἢ ἐξ ὄντος ἢ ἐκ μὴ ὄντος, ἐκ δὲ τούτων ἀμφοτέρων ἀδύνατον εἶναι.]

Metaph. 1. 3. [Τῶν δὴ πρῶτων φιλοσοφησάντων οἱ πλείστοι τὰς ἐν ὕλης εἶδει μόνας φήθησαν ἀρχὰς εἶναι πάντων· ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἔστιν ἅπαντα τὰ ὄντα, καὶ ἐξ οὗ γίγνεται πρῶτου καὶ εἰς ὃ φθεῖρεται τελευταῖον, τῆς μὲν οὐσίας ὑπομενούσης, τοῖς δὲ πάθεσι μεταβαλλούσης, τοῦτο στοιχεῖον καὶ ταύτην ἀρχὴν φασιν εἶναι τῶν ὄντων, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὔτε γίγνεσθαι οὐθὲν οἴονται οὔτε ἀπόλλυσθαι.]

in nature, so far would he be from being truly affirmed the maker of all things : upon this ground Cicero, as Lactantius cites him, denied that God was the author of any of the elements : *It is not probable*, said he, *that the matter, whence all things did arise, was made by divine Providence ; and, If matter was not made by God, then neither earth, nor water, nor air, nor fire, were made by him*<sup>d</sup> ; to invert which discourse, we say, that God did make all these things, (earth, sea, fire, and air,) as the Holy Scripture frequently asserts, wherefore the matter of them was also his work : he was not only, as St Basil speaks, an inventor of figures, (or a raiser of motions,) but the maker of nature itself<sup>e</sup> ; and of all that is substantial therein.

2 Again, God is in Scripture affirmed to be the true proprietary and possessor of all things, none excepted ; how so, if he did not make them ? *For he that did not make, cannot*, as Justin argues, *have any right to that which is not made*<sup>f</sup>. It is the argument by which the Scripture frequently proves God to be the owner and disposer of things, because he made them : *The earth*, saith the Psalmist, *is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof ; the world, and they that dwell therein : for he hath founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the floods*. So, because (we may say) he did produce

Ps. xxiv. 1.  
Gen. xiv.  
19.  
Deut. x.  
14.

<sup>d</sup> Primum igitur non est probabile eam materiam rerum, unde orta sunt omnia, esse divina Providentia effectam ; sed habere et habuisse vim et naturam suam.—Quod si non est a Deo materia facta, ne terra quidem, et aqua, et aër, et ignis a Deo factus est.—Instit. II. [9.]

<sup>e</sup> 'Ο Θεός—οὐχὶ σχημάτων ἐστιν εὐρετής, ἀλλ' αὐτῆς τῆς φύσεως τῶν ὄντων δημιουργός.—Bas. Hexaem. Hom. β'. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 14 D.]

<sup>f</sup> Τῷ γὰρ μὴ πεποιηκότι οὐδεμία ἐξουσία πρὸς τὸ μὴ γεγινός.—Cohort. ad Gr. [cap. xxiii. Opp. p. 24 B.]

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matter, and doth sustain its being ; therefore he, by the most excellent sort, and upon the best ground of right, doth own it, and may justly use it at his pleasure ; otherwise might we not say with Tertullian, *If God did not make matter, he using a thing not his own, because not made by him, either he used it precariously, as needing it, or injuriously, as usurping upon it by force*<sup>g</sup>.

3 The supposing anything to be eternal, uncreated, and independent upon God, doth advance that being in those respects unto an equality with God, imparting thereto so great and divine attributes : *It will become, as St Basil saith, God's peer, or equal in dignity, being dignified with the same privileges*<sup>h</sup>. That supposition likewise in effect depriveth God of those special perfections, independency and all-sufficiency ; making him in his operations and performances to depend upon, and to be in a manner subject unto matter ; to need its concurrence, and to be unable to perform anything further than it admits : for, *None, as Tertullian discourseth, is free from needing that, whose stock he useth ; none is exempt from subjection to that, which he needs that he may use ; and none who lends of his own to use, is not in this superior to him who lends it for use*<sup>i</sup>. The very doubting about this made Seneca put such

<sup>g</sup> De alieno ergo usus, aut precario usus est, qua egens ejus : aut et injuria, qua prævalens ejus.—Adv. Hermog. cap. ix. [Opp. p. 236 D.]

<sup>h</sup> Ὁμότιμος ἔσται Θεῷ τῶν αὐτῶν προσβίων ἀξιοσύνη.

<sup>i</sup> Nemo non eget eo, de cujus utitur : nemo non subjicitur ei, cujus eget ut possit uti.—Et nemo qui præstat de suo uti, non in hoc superior est eo, cui præstat uti.—Ut supra [cap. viii. Opp. p. 236 B.]

absurd and impious questions as these : *How God's power is limited? whether he effects whatever he pleaseth, or is disappointed by want of matter? whether he doth not form many things ill, not from defect of art in himself, but from disobedience of the subject-matter<sup>k</sup>?* Which questions we easily resolve by saying, nothing is impossible to God ; his will can never be crossed or disappointed ; he can never do anything bad, or imperfect in its kind ; because he createth matter itself answerable to his design.

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4 As Aristotle well discoursed<sup>1</sup> against the ancient philosophers, who, before Anaxagoras, did assign but one principle of things, a material and passive one, as if no active principle were required ; so may we argue against him and them together. If God did produce and insert an active principle into nature, (as who can imagine those admirable works of nature, the seminal propagation and nutrition of plants, and however more especially the generation, motion, sense, fancy, appetite, passion of animals, to be accomplished by a mere passive agitation of matter, without some active principle distinct from matter, which disposeth and determineth it to the production of such effects?) if God could, I say, produce and insert such an active principle, (such an *ἐντελέχεια*, as the philosopher calleth it,) why

<sup>k</sup> Quantum Deus possit? materiam ipse sibi formet, an data utatur? utrum idea materiæ prius superveniat, an materia idæ? Deus quicquid vult efficiat, an in multis rebus illum tractanda destituant; et a magno artifice prave formentur multa, non quia cessat ars, sed quia id in quo exercetur, sæpe inobsequens arti est? —Nat. Quæst. Lib. 1. Præf. [§ 14.]

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. Metaph. 1. 3.]

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5 Yea further, if God hath produced immaterial beings, or simple and uncompounded substances distinct from matter, such as Angels and the souls of men, merely out of nothing, (for out of what pre-existent stuff could they be made?) then may he as well create matter out of nothing; for what greater difficulty can we conceive in creating so much lower and more imperfect a thing, than in creating those more excellent substances, so much fuller, as it were, of entity, or so far more removed from nothing? If any one thing is producible out of nothing, why may not all things capable of existence be so produced by a competent and omnipotent virtue? *Why not, as Tertullian argued, all things out of nothing, if anything out of nothing; except if the Divine virtue, which drew somewhat out of nothing, was insufficient to produce all things thence<sup>m</sup>?* But that such immaterial substances were produced by God, we before, from many plain testimonies of Divine revelation, did shew: and particularly the souls of men are produced from God's breath, or by the efficacy of his word.

Ps. xxxiii.  
9;  
cxlviii. 5.

6 The manner of God's making the world, expressed in Scripture, by mere will and command, (*He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast; he commanded, and they were created,*) that only by uttering the word *fiat*, (not audibly,

<sup>m</sup> Immo cur non omnia ex nihilo, si aliquid ex nihilo? nisi si insufficiens fuit divina virtus omnibus producendis, quæ aliquid protulerit ex nihilo.—Adv. Herm. cap. xv. [p. 238 c.]

but mentally, that is, by an act of volition,) all things should be formed and constituted in their specific natures and perfections, doth argue, that matter, or any other thing possible, might easily by the Divine power be produced out of nothing. Likewise effecting miracles superior or contrary to the law and course of nature, without any preparatory dispositions induced into the suscipient matter, in the same manner, by mere willing, saying, or commanding, whereof there be in the Scripture frequent instances, doth persuade the same; *Θέλω, καθάρισθῃτι, I will; be thou cleansed: Woman, great is thy faith, γενήθῃτω σοι, ὡς θέλεις, be it to thee, as thou desirest: Νεανίσκε, σοὶ λέγω, ἐγέρθῃτι, Young man, I say to thee, Wake,* from the sleep of death: so did our Saviour speak, and the effect immediately followed; whereby, as he demonstrated his Divine power, so he declared the manner, whereby Divine power doth incomprehensibly operate in the production of things; and that it therein nowise dependeth upon matter: for it is nowise harder or more impossible to produce matter itself, than to produce a form therein without or against an aptitude to receive it: nay, it seemeth more difficult to raise children unto Abraham out of stones, than to draw them out of nothing; there being a positive obstacle to be removed, here no apparent resistance; there, as well somewhat preceding to be destroyed, as somewhat new to be produced, here, only somewhat simply to be produced: especially considering, as we said, that God useth no other means, instruments, or applications in these productions, than his bare word or command; which there is no reason why we should

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Luke v. 13.  
Matt. xv.  
28.

Luke vii.  
14.

Matt. iii. 9.

SERM. not conceive as able immediately to make the  
XII. matter, as to produce the form of things.

7 Lastly, The Holy Text, describing the manner and order of the creation, doth insinuate this truth. *The Scripture*, saith Tertullian well, *doth first pronounce the earth to be made, then setteth out its quality; as likewise first professing the heaven made, it in the sequel doth superinduce its disposition*<sup>n</sup>. *In the beginning*, saith Moses, *God made heaven and earth; now the earth was without form; that is, it seems, God at first did make the matter of heaven and earth devoid of all form and order, a confused and unshapen mass; then he digested and distinguished the parts of them, by several steps, orderly raising thence all those various kinds, and well arrayed hosts of goodly creatures: first he made the stones and timber, and all requisite materials, then did he rear and frame this stately fabric. So the words do sound, and may well be understood.*

From these premises we may conclude against those philosophers, who, destitute of the light of revelation, did conceit otherwise, and against those Christians who have followed the philosophers, (as Hermogenes of old, and Volkeliuſ of late, together with the sectators of their opinions,) that God did create, (in the most strict and scholastical sense of that word, did create,) that is,

<sup>n</sup> Scriptura terram primo factam edicit, dehinc qualitatem ipsius edisserit; sicut et cœlum primo factum professa, *In principio fecit Deus cœlum* dehinc dispositionem ejus superinducit.—Ut supra, cap. XXVI. [p. 242 D.]

Τὴν ὕλην προῦποστήσας, εἰδοποίησεν ὑστερον ἐκάστην τάξιν, καὶ σχῆμα, καὶ μέγεθος περιθεῖς.—Greg. Naz. [Orat. XLIV. Opp. Tom. I. p. 837 B.]

either immediately or mediately did produce out of nothing, or did bestow entirely a new existence unto everything, which is, not excepting any one: and that is the sense of the words, having made heaven and earth; or of the title, Maker of heaven and earth, ascribed unto God.

Which title as all sober Christians have always acknowledged, and the Holy Oracles do most plainly avouch, due to the one true God alone, (for, <sup>1</sup> *To us there is but one God, the Father, from whom* <sup>6.</sup> *are all things,*) so there were divers heretics of old, Marcion and others of the Gnostic crew, who contradicted it; affirming, that the God of the Old Testament, who made the world and enacted the ancient Law, whom Moses and the Prophets did declare, was not the same God with him from whom the Gospel proceeded, and who is preached therein; the Mosaic God being a worse conditioned God, fierce and rigid, angry and implacable, delighting in wars and mischief; but the evangelical God, the Father of our Lord, being mild and gentle; void of all wrath and spleen; very indulgent and beneficent°. Of kin to that fancy of Marcion, was the error of the Manichees, who supposed

- ° Prædicat his duos esse Patres, divisaque regna.  
Esse mali causam Dominum, qui condidit orbem,  
Quique figuravit carnem spiramine vivam,  
Quique dedit legem, et vatum qui voce locutus;  
Hunc negat esse bonum, justum tamen esse fatetur,  
Crudelem, durum, belli cui sæva voluptas,  
Judicio horrendum, precibus mansuescere nullis.  
Esse alium suadens, nulli qui cognitus unquam,  
Qui non est usquam, falsum sine nomine numen,  
Constituens nihil, et nulla præcepta locutus;  
Hunc ait esse bonum, nullum qui judicat, æque  
Sed spargit cunctis vitam, non invidet ulli.—

Adv. Marc. Poem. I. [Inter Tertull. Opp. p. 629.]



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two first causes of things; from one whereof good, from the other evil did fatally proceed; which conceit, it seems, they drew from the Persian, Egyptian, or other Ethnical doctrines; the which we have recited by Plutarch in his discourse about Isis and Osiris<sup>p</sup>; The Persian magi, said he, had their Oromazes and Arimanius; the Egyptians, their Osiris and Typhon; the Chaldeans, their good and bad planets; the Greeks, their Zeus and Hades; the Pythagoreans, their Monas and Dyas; Empedocles, his Concord and Discord, &c. The like report we have in divers other writers<sup>q</sup>: the common reason, or ground, upon which these erroneous conceits were built, was this; there appearing to be in nature some things imperfect, and some things bad, (as ill dispositions, inclinations, and passions of mind; ill tempers and diseases of body, attended

<sup>p</sup> [Opp. Tom. vii. p. 456—460. Ed. Reisk.]

<sup>q</sup> Aug. de Civ. Dei [v. 21. Opp. Tom. vii. col. 138 E. A quibus (Persis) solos duos deos cœli, unum bonum, alterum malum continent literæ istorum.] cum Lud. Vive [Persæ Magi, quorum princeps Zoroastres, duo principia ponebant: unum bonum, alterum malum; numen bonum cœli, malum vero inferorum deum arbitantes. Hunc Plutonem et Arimanium dixerunt dæmonem malum, illum vero dæmonem bonum Jovem et Horomasdem—Magos videtur secutus Plato libro decimo Legum, cum animas ponit in mundo geminas: alteram unde proficiantur bona, alteram unde mala, &c.—Col. 324 A. Ed. Basil. 1570.]

Diog. Laert. in Proœmio [§ 6. The passage is given at length, p. 250 of this volume.]

Euseb. Præpar. Evang. [I. 8. Ἐμπεδοκλῆς στοιχεῖα τέσσαρα, πῦρ, ὕδωρ, αἰθέρα, γαῖαν, αἰτίαν δὲ τούτων φιλίαν καὶ νεῖκος.]

Arist. Metaph. [I. 4. Ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τὰ παντὶα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἐνόντα ἐφαίνετο ἐν τῇ φύσει, καὶ οὐ μόνον τάς τε καὶ τὸ καλὸν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀταξία καὶ τὸ αἰσχροὺν, καὶ πλείω τὰ κακὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, καὶ τὰ φαῦλα τῶν καλῶν, οὕτως ἄλλος τις φιλίαν εἰσήνεγκε καὶ νεῖκος, ἐκάτερον ἐκατέρων αἰτίων τούτων.]

Simplic. [Comment. in Ench. Epict. cap. xxxv. p. 265 et seqq. Ed. Schweigh.]

with pains and troubles in life; vices, discords, deformities, antipathies, irregularities, monsters, poisons, and the like things dispersed in nature,) this sort of things they supposed could not proceed from perfect goodness, the fountain of what was good, lovely, orderly, convenient, pleasant, and desirable: *If* (discourseth Plutarch, expressing the main of their argument) *nothing can naturally arise without a cause, and good cannot afford causality to evil, it is necessary that nature should have a proper seed and principle of evil as well as good: and thus it seems to the most and wisest; for they, indeed, conceive two gods as it were counterplotting each other; one the contriver and producer of good things, and the other of bad; calling the better one God, the other, Dæmon*<sup>r</sup>. But this discourse hath two faulty suppositions: it supposeth some things to be imperfect and evil, which are not truly such; and to those things, which are truly such, it assigneth an imaginary and wrong cause.

1 It supposeth some beings according to their original nature and constitution to be evil and imperfect; which supposition is, I say, false; for there is no sort of creature which did not at first pass the Divine approbation: *God saw everything* Gen. i. 31. *which he had made, and behold it was very good:* good, that is, convenient and suitable to its design,

<sup>r</sup> Εἰ γὰρ οὐθέν ἀνατίως πέφυκε γενέσθαι, αἰτίαν δὲ κακοῦ τ' ἀγαθὸν οὐκ ἂν παράσχοι, δεῖ γένεσιν ἰδίαν καὶ ἀρχὴν, ὥσπερ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ, τὴν φύσιν ἔχειν. καὶ δοκεῖ τοῦτο τοῖς πλείστοις καὶ σοφωτάτοις. νομίζουσι γὰρ οἱ μὲν θεοὺς εἶναι δύο, καθάπερ ἀντιτέχνους· τὸν μὲν γὰρ ἀγαθῶν, τὸν δὲ φαῦλων δημιουργόν. οἱ δὲ τὸν μὲν ἀμείνονα, Θεόν, τὸν δὲ ἕτερον, Δαίμονα καλοῦσιν.—De Isid. et Osirid. [Opp. Tom. vii. p. 456. Ed. Reisk.]

**SERM.** (or its Author's idea,) fair and decent in its place,  
**XII.** according to its proportion; very good, that is, perfect and complete in its degree, without any defect, blemish, or flaw; not liable to any reasonable blame or exception. There are, indeed, among the creatures some degrees of perfection<sup>a</sup>, (it was fit there should be so in great variety, that things might by comparison illustrate and commend one another; that there might be regular subordinations, and subserviencies, and harmonies; that several faculties of intelligent creatures might be exercised, and improved, and delighted; that the

**Eph. iii. 10.** πολυποίκιλος σοφία, *the manifold, or multiform wisdom* of the Creator might be displayed, acknowledged, and celebrated; there are, I say, for such purposes in nature creatures gradually different in excellency,) whence some things may be said comparatively imperfect, or rather less excellent and noble in respect to other things, endued with higher faculties, or (as they be sometimes called) perfections of nature; some things are less active and more passive than others; are not so capable of enjoyments delectable unto, and more subject to impressions distasteful to their particular nature; which passivities and displeasures are not simply wills, because they do suit the degree of the particular natures of those subjects, being also ever overbalanced with other pleasing activities and enjoyments: so have things different measures of excellency; but nothing, as it comes from God's hand, or stands in its rank in nature, is positively

<sup>a</sup> Naturæ omnes, quoniam sunt, et ideo habent modum suum, speciem suam, et quandam secum pacem suam, profecto bonæ sunt.—Aug. de Civ. Dei, Lib. xii. [cap. 5. Opp. Tom. vii. col. 304 B.]

imperfect, or void of that perfection which is due to its kind; much less is any creature absolutely bad, that is, ugly, or noxious, or troublesome, or cumbersome to the universe; so that it were better away out of it, than in it. *God, saith the Hebrew* SERM.  
XII.  
*Wise Man, created all things, that they might have* Wisdom i.  
14.  
*their being, and the generations of the world were healthful, and there is no poison or destruction in them.* Everything contributes somewhat to the use and benefit, or to the beauty and ornament of the whole: no weed grows out of the earth, no insect creeps upon the ground, which hath not its elegancy, and yields not its profit; nothing is abominable or despicable, though all things are not alike amiable and admirable; there is therefore nothing in all the compass of nature unfit or unworthy to have proceeded from God; nothing which he beseemingly, without derogation to his excellencies, may not own for his work; nothing which in its rank and degree doth not confer to the manifestation of his glorious power, admirable wisdom, and excellent goodness: *O Lord, (cried* Ps. civ. 24.  
*the devout Psalmist upon particular survey and consideration of them,) how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.* That which we call poison, is such only relatively, being noxious or destructive to one part, but innocent, wholesome, and useful to some other part; and never prejudicial to the whole body of things: yea, even to that part itself it is commonly beneficial in some case or season; affording, if not continual alimony, yet sometime physic thereto, and serving to expel another poison or mischief more imminently

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dangerous. That which we call a monster, is not unnatural in regard to the whole contexture of causes<sup>t</sup>, but ariseth no less methodically, than anything most ordinary; and it also hath its good end and use, well serving to illustrate the beauty and convenience of nature's usual course. As for pain and grief incident to the natures of things, without regard to any demerit or justice, they are not properly evils, but adherences to the less perfect natures of things<sup>u</sup>; in a state liable to which God not only justly, but wisely, according to his pleasure, might constitute things, for the reasons and ends before insinuated; for no reason obliged him to confer upon everything extreme perfection; he might dispense his liberalities in what kind and measure he thought good. In fine, the reason of offence we take at anything of this kind, seeming bad or ugly to us, ariseth from our defect of knowledge and sagacity, we not being able to discern the particular tendency of each thing to the common utility and benefit of the world<sup>v</sup>.

2 But as for those real imperfections and evils, truly so called, (which alone, as St Basil speaketh, are properly evil, and most worthy of the appellation of evils<sup>v</sup>;) habitual distempers of soul, and irre-

<sup>t</sup> Ἔστι τὸ τέρας τῶν παρὰ φύσιν τι, παρὰ φύσιν δ' οὐ πᾶσαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ· περὶ γὰρ τὴν αἰὲ καὶ τὴν ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὐδὲν γίνεται παρὰ φύσιν.—Arist. de Gen. Anim. iv. [4.]

<sup>u</sup> Τῆς τοῦ ὁλοῦ δημιουργίας, ὥσπερ τινὲς καὶ ἀναγκαῖαι ἐπόμεναι φύσεις.—Max. Tyr. Diss. xlv. [xli. p. 489. Ed. Davis.]

<sup>v</sup> Nos admonet Divina providentia, non res insipienter vituperare, sed utilitatem rerum diligenter inquirere; et ubi nostrum ingenium vel infirmitas deficit, ibi credere occulta, &c.; atque hæc ipsa aut humilitatis exercitatio est, aut elationis attritio.—Aug. de Civ. Dei. [xi. 22. Opp. Tom. vii. col. 288 D.]

<sup>v</sup> Τὸ μὲν οὖν κυρίως κακὸν ἡ ἁμαρτία, ὅπερ μάλιστα ἐστὶ τῆς τοῦ

gular actions; errors, and vices, and sins; we need not search for any one eternal or primitive cause of them: although order, uniformity, beauty, and perfection do, yet disorder, confusion, deformity, and defect do not, argue any unity of cause, whence they should spring; the true causes of them are sufficiently notorious; not the will or power of a Creator<sup>a</sup>, but the wilfulness and impotency of creatures are the fountains of them. They are no substantial beings, and so do not need an infinite power to create them; they do hardly need a positive cause; being themselves rather defects, than effects; privations of being, than positive beings: *Let no man, saith St Austin, seek an efficient cause of a bad will; for there is no efficient, but a deficient thereof; for that itself is not an effectio, but a defection<sup>b</sup>: and, An evil will, saith he again, is the efficient cause of an ill work; an evil will hath no cause<sup>b</sup>: that is, none beside itself, or its own deficiency: and again; Evil hath no nature, but the loss of good hath received the name of evil<sup>c</sup>: however, most certainly, The rise and root of sin is our free will and choice<sup>d</sup>; it is, Κακὸν βλάστημα προαιρέσεως, as Cyril Hier.*

κακοῦ προσηγορίας ἄξιον.—In Orat. "Quod Deus non est Auctor Malorum." [Opp. Tom. II. p. 76 E.]

<sup>a</sup> Peccatum a Deo non est, quia nec est.—Lips. [Phys. Stoic. I. 12, p. 27.]

<sup>b</sup> Nemo querat efficientem causam malæ voluntatis; non enim est efficiens, sed deficiens; quia nec illa effectio est, sed defectio.—De Civ. Dei, XII. 7. [Opp. Tom. VII. col. 306 C.]

<sup>c</sup> Mala voluntas efficiens est operis mali, malæ autem voluntatis efficiens est nihil.—Ibid. [cap. VI. col. 304 F.]

<sup>d</sup> Mali nulla natura est, sed amissio boni mali nomen accepit.—XI. 9. [col. 279 E.]

<sup>e</sup> Ἀρχὴ καὶ ῥίζα τῆς ἀμαρτίας τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ αὐτεξούσιον.—Bas. ut supr. [p. 74 A.]

SERM.  
XII.Deut. iv.  
16;  
xxxi. 29.  
Gen. vi. 11.  
Exod.  
xxxii. 7,  
&c.

saith, *A bad sprout from our choice*<sup>e</sup>. Men, or other intellectual and free agents, their voluntarily averting themselves from the supreme true good to inferior appearing goods; their wilfully declining from the way which God doth shew and prescribe to them; their rejecting the advices, and disobeying the laws of God; their thwarting the dictates of that reason which God did put in them; their abusing their natural faculties; their perverting and corrupting themselves, and others also, by ill example, persuasion, allurements, violence; these causes of such evils are most visible and palpable: we need not go far, nor rise to the top of things, to find an author, upon whom we may charge our evils; they are most truly called our ways, our works, our imaginations, our inventions and devices; they are the children of our affected stupidity and our naughty sloth; of our precipitant choice<sup>f</sup>, of our stubborn will, of our unbridled passion; they are wholly imputed to us; we are blamed, we are condemned, we are punished for them: as it is horrible blasphemy to ascribe them to the most good God<sup>g</sup>; so it is vain to imagine any other necessary principle, any uncreated mischievous Arimanius, any spiteful Cacodæmon, any eternal Fate to father them upon.

The mischiefs also of pain and grief consequent upon those distempers and misdemeanours (*That*

<sup>e</sup> [Κακὸν αὐτεξούσιον, βλάστημα προαιρέσεως.—Catech. II. Opp. p. 21 B.]

<sup>f</sup> "Ἰθὺ δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων ἀρχὴν τὴν αὐτοφυῆ, ἣν ἡ ψυχὴς ἐξουσία κυύσκει τε καὶ τελεσφορεῖ, ἢ ὄνομα μοχθηρία.—Max. Tyr. Diss. xxv. [xli. p. 491. Ed. Davis.]

<sup>g</sup> Αἰτία ἐλομένη· Θεὸς ἀναίτιος.—Plato de Rep. x. [617 E.]

Οὐ γὰρ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, μὰ Δία, οὐκ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ.—Max. Tyr. [ibid. p. 485.]

unwilling brood of wilful evils<sup>h</sup>, as Damascene calls them) have very discernible originals: they are partly to be imputed to us, and partly attributed to God: we by our faults deserve and draw them to ourselves; God in justice and wisdom doth inflict them on us: *Perditio tua ex te; O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself*; and, *Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves*: so doth God charge the cause of such evils upon us; and, *Shall there be any evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it? Doth not evil and good proceed out of the Most High? I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil*: so God assumes the causality of them to himself<sup>i</sup>. We need therefore not to inquire after any other cause of these evils, (*mala pœnæ*,) so called because they are displeasing to sense or fancy; although considering the needfulness and usefulness of them in respect to public benefit, (as they are exemplary and monitive,) and their wholesomeness for particular correction and cure, (for, *No chastening*, as the Apostle saith, *for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby*,) in such respects they may rather be called good things; however, as they have anything bad in them, they proceed from us; as they contain somewhat good, they are from God: which sufficiently confuteth those heretical opiniators, and decideth the controversy;

SERM.  
XII.

Hos. xiii. 9.  
Isai. iii. 9.

Amos iii. 6.  
Lam. iii.  
38.  
Isai. xlv. 7.

Heb. xii.  
11.

<sup>h</sup> Ἐκουσίῳν κακῶν τὰ ἀκούσια ἔκγονα.—Damasc. de Orth. Fid. iv. 19. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 289 E.]

<sup>i</sup> Tertull. in Marc. Lib. II. [Opp. p. 388 D. p. 389 A.]



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it being vain to suppose any other, beside these most apparent causes of such evils; our bad desert, and God's just providence. It is considerable, that even vice (although the worst thing in the world, and bad to the subject thereof) is yet in some respects useful; it in regard to the whole is not unprofitable<sup>k</sup>; it serveth to the illustration of God's holy attributes; it is a foil to virtue, and setteth off its lustre. But let thus much suffice concerning the objects of the creation.

I shall next touch a consideration or two concerning the manner how, and the reason why, God did make the world<sup>l</sup>; which will commend to us his doing it, and intimate some grounds of duty, and both direct and excite our practice in respect thereto. The manner of God's producing the world was altogether voluntary, and absolutely free; it did not issue from him *ἀπροαιρέτως*, without counsel or choice, not (as some philosophers have conceived) by natural or necessary emanation or result<sup>m</sup>; as heat from fire, or light from the sun, or shadow from a body; but from a wise, free choice: he so made the world, that he could wholly have abstained from making it, that he could have

<sup>k</sup> Γίνεται μὲν γὰρ κακία πως κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως λόγον, καὶ—οὐκ ἀχρήστως γίνεται πρὸς τὰ ὅλα.—Chrysippus apud Plut. de Stoic. Contr. [Opp. Tom. x. p. 343. Ed. Reisk.]

<sup>l</sup> Cf. Sen. Qu. Nat. Præf. [§ 14.] et Ep. LXV. [10.] Fecit quam optimum potuit, ait Plato in Timæo.

<sup>m</sup> Αἴτιον μὲν αὐτοῦ ὁμολογοῦσι τὸν Θεόν, αἴτιον δὲ ἀπροαιρέτως, ὡς τῆς σκιᾶς τὸ σῶμα, καὶ τῆς λαμπρόδος τὸ ἀπαύγαζον.—Bas. Hexæm. [Hom. i. Opp. Tom. i. p. 7 D.]

Οἶονεἰ ἀποσκίασμα τῆς δυνάμεως.—Ibid.

Δούλοι βασιλέων εἰσιν, ὁ βασιλεὺς θεῶν,

Ὁ θεὸς ἀνάγκης. . . .

Philemon. [Frag. Theban. Menand. et Philem. Rell. Ed. Meinek. p. 366.]

framed it otherwise, according to an infinite variety of ways. He could not be fatally determined, there being no superior cause to guide him, or to constrain him anywise; (to do, or not to do; to do thus, or otherwise;) he could not be obliged to impart any perfection, being absolute master of all things possible, and debtor unto none upon any account: it is his privilege therefore and property to perform all things *κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος* Eph. i. 11. *αὐτοῦ, According to the counsel of his will, or according to his wise pleasure, as St Paul expresseth it; and accordingly we hear the Elders in the Revelation acknowledging, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, καὶ διὰ τὸ θελημα σου, and for thy will they are and were created: they do affirm God's pleasure to be the cause of his creating things, and they imply its being so to be the ground of our due veneration, gratitude, and all devotion; these being tributes due unto free goodness and bounty: if he made all things fatally, no praise or thanks were due to him; if he doeth things so, there is no reason to offer prayers to him, to seek his aid, or implore his favour; no devotion toward him hath a ground, or can subsist. It is also evident, that if the world had been produced in way of necessary emanation, that it should have been eternal; as if the sun had been eternal, his light had been eternal also; if fire had been, its heat likewise had been from eternity: but that the world was produced in time, not long since, within six or seven thousand years, not only faith and Divine chronology do assure us; but reason also shews, and all history conspires to persuade*

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us; there being no plain monument, or probable memory of actions, beyond that time; and by what progressions mankind was propagated over the world; how, and when, and where, nations were planted, empires raised, cities built, arts invented or improved, it is not very hard to trace near the original times and places. The world, therefore, in respect of time conceivable by us is very young, and not many successions of ages, or lives of men, have passed between its beginning and ours; whence it plainly appears, that it was freely produced by God.

And how he produced it, the Scripture further teacheth us. It was not with any laborious care or toil; not with the help of any engines or instruments subservient; not by inducing any preparatory dispositions or aptitudes, but *ψιλῶ τῷ βούλεσθαι*, by his mere willing, as Clemens Alexandrinus<sup>a</sup> speaks; his will and word were, as Tertullian<sup>o</sup> expounds it, the hands, by which it is said that God made the heavens; at his call they did all immediately spring up out of nothing; at his command they presently arranged themselves into order: it was not a high strain of rhetoric in Moses, as Longinus<sup>p</sup> deemed, thus to describe the creation, but a most proper expression of that incomprehensible efficacy, which attends the Divine will and decree.

But since God did not only make the world

<sup>a</sup> [Cohort. ad Gentes, cap. iv. Opp. Tom. i. p. 54.]

<sup>o</sup> Adv. Hermog. cap. xlv. [Opp. p. 249 A. Denique sermone ejus coeli confirmati sunt, et spiritu ipsius universæ virtutes eorum: Hic est Dei dextera, et manus ambæ, per quas operatus est ea quæ molitus est.]

<sup>p</sup> Long. [Sect. ix. 9.]

freely, but wisely; and since all wise agents act SERM. XII. to some purpose, and aim at some end, why (may it be inquired) did God make the world? what impulsive reason or inducement was there moving his will to do it? We may answer with Plato; ἀγαθὸς ἦν, *He was good; and he that is good doth not envy any good to anything*<sup>1</sup>: his natural benignity and munificence was the pure motive that incited or invited him to this great action of communicating existence, and suitable perfection to his creatures, respectively<sup>r</sup>: no benefit or emolument could hence accrue to him; he could receive no accession of beatitude; he did not need any profit or pleasure from without, being full within, rich in all perfection, completely happy in the contemplation and enjoyment of himself. *Can a* Job xxii. 2. *man, can any creature, be profitable to God? No; Our goodness doth not extend to him; we cannot* Ps. xvi. 2. *anywise advance or amplify him thereby; it is because goodness is freely diffusive and communicative of itself; because love is active and fruitful in beneficence; because highest excellency is void of all envy, selfishness, and tenacity, that the world was produced such as it was; those perfections being intrinsical to God's nature, (for God* <sup>1 John iv. 8, 16.</sup> *is love, that is, essentially loving and good,) disposed him to bestow so much of being, beauty, delight, and comfort to his creatures. Hence, The* Ps. xxxiii. *earth, saith the Psalmist, is full of the goodness of* <sup>55</sup> *cxix.* 64

<sup>1</sup> Quæris quid propositum sit Deo? Bonitas; ita certe Plato ait. Quæ Deo faciendi mundum causa fuit? Bonus est; bono nulla cujusquam boni invidia est.—Sen. Ep. lxxv. [10.]

<sup>r</sup> Ἐποίησεν ἀγγέλους, ἀρχαγγέλους, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας τῶν ἀσωμάτων οὐσίας· ἐποίησεν δὲ δι' ἕτερον μὲν οὐδέν, δι' ἀγαθότητα δὲ μόνον, &c.—Chrys. ad Stag. Orat. i. Opp. Tom. vi. [p. 86.]

SERM.  
XII.Ps. cxi.  
9:  
יְהוָה

civ. 28.

*the Lord*; that is, everything therein, according to its state and degree, is an effect of the Divine goodness, partakes thereof both in its being and in its enjoyments; and, *The Lord*, saith he again, *is good to all, and his tender mercies* (or his bowels of affection) *are over all his works*: he is good, and tenderly kind toward all his works, as well in producing them as preserving them; in freely rendering them capable of receiving good, as in carefully providing, and liberally dispensing good unto them; *That thou givest them* (saith the Psalmist, speaking with respect to the university of things) *they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are all filled with good*: it is from God's open hand, (that is, from his unconfined bounty and liberality) that all creatures do receive all that good which fills them; which satisfieth their needs, and satiateth their desires: a glimpse of which truth the ancient Pagans seem to have had, when they, as Aristotle observed, did commonly suppose Love to have been the first and chief of the Gods; the original source and framer of things\*. But I will no longer insist on this point in way of doctrine or disquisition; I shall only adjoin a little application.

I The belief and consideration of this point (that God is the Maker of heaven and earth) must necessarily beget in us highest esteem, admiration, and adoration of God, and his Divine excellencies, his power, wisdom, and goodness: for what a power must that be (how unconceivably great,

\* Arist. Metaph. i. 4. [Οὗτος (Παρμενίδης) γὰρ κατασκευάζων τὴν τοῦ παντὸς γένεσιν "Πρώτιστον μὲν φησιν ἔρωτα θεῶν μητίσαστο πάντων," "Ἡσιόδου δὲ—"Ἦδ' ἔπος, ὃς πάντεσσι μεταπρέπει ἀθανάτοισιν."]

both intensively and extensively, must it be!) which could so expeditely and easily rear such a stupendously vast frame! vast beyond the reach of our sense, of our imagination, of any rational collection that we can make! the earth, on which we dwell, divided into so many great empires, full of so many inhabitants, bearing such variety of creatures different in kind, having in respect to the whole but the like proportion, as a little sand hath to the earth itself, or a drop of water to the great ocean! What a wisdom must that be, how unconceivably large and penetrant, that could contrive such an innumerable number of creatures, (the artifice which appears in one, in the least of which, doth so far transcend our conceit,) could digest them so fitly, could connect them so firmly in such an order! What a goodness and benignity must it be, (how immense and boundless!) that did extend itself in affection and care, for so many creatures, abundantly providing for the need and comfort of them all! how transcendently glorious is the majesty of him, that was Author of all those beauties and strengths, those splendours and magnificencies we do with so much pleasure and so much wonder behold! Well might the devout Psalmist and divine Prophet hence frequently take occasion of exciting us to praise and celebrate the perfections of God: well might even heathen philosophers from contemplation of the world be raised into fits of composing hymns and eulogies of its great Maker.

2 This consideration likewise may confer to the breeding of hearty gratitude and humble affection toward God; for that we are upon many accounts

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very nearly and highly concerned in this great production. We ourselves, whatever we are, and all we have, and all we enjoy; all our intrinsical endowments, and all our extrinsical accommodations are parts thereof, and did proceed from God; yea all the whole frame was designed by him with a particular regard, and from an especial good-will unto us; was fitted for our enjoyment and use: the world was made as a convenient house for us to dwell in, as a pleasant theatre for us to view, as a profitable school for our instruction, as a holy temple for us to perform offices of no less sweet than reasonable devotion<sup>t</sup>; for our benefit those huge orbs roll incessantly, diffusing their glorious light, and dispensing their kindly influences; for our sake the earth is decked with all that goodly furniture, and stored with all that abundance of comfortable provisions: all these things out of pure benevolence, not being moved with any desert of ours, not regarding any profit of his own, before any desire or any thought of ours (before we were capable of wishing or thinking) God was pleased to contrive, and to accomplish for

<sup>t</sup> Est enim mundus quasi communis Deorum atque hominum domus, aut urbs utrorumque.—Cic. de Nat. Deor. II. [62, 154.] de Fin. [III. 19, 64.]

Sic et totum mundum deorum esse immortalium templum.—Sen. de Benef. VII. 7, [2.] Vid. Ep. XC. Cic. in Som. Scip. [cap. III.]

Philo Jud. [Τὸ ἀνωτάτω καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἱερὸν Θεοῦ νομίζουσιν τὸν σύμπαντα χρόνόν κόσμον εἶναι.—De Monarch. Lib. II. Opp. Tom. II. p. 222.]

Διδασκαλείον καὶ παιδευτήριον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ψυχῶν.—Bas. [Hexaem. Hom. I. Opp. Tom. I. p. 5 E.]

Οὐ πόνων ἀμοιβὴν ἔδωκεν, οὐδὲ κατορθωμάτων ἀντιδοσιν, &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ'. [Opp. Tom. VI. p. 511.]

Cogitavit nos ante natura quam genuit, &c.—Sen. de Benef. II. 23.

us. We, said a philosopher, regard and esteem SERM. XII.  
ourselves overmuch, if we think ourselves worthy, that  
so great matters should be agitated for our sake<sup>u</sup>:  
and the Psalmist signifies the same, when, upon  
contemplation of the world, he saith, *When I con-* Pa. viii. 3.  
sider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon  
and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is  
man, that thou art mindful of him? That the  
Author of so great and glorious a work should  
vouchsafe to regard so mean things as us, to visit  
us continually with a provident inspection and  
care over our welfare, to lay so vast projects, and  
accomplish so mighty works in regard to us; what  
a demonstration of admirable condescension, what  
a ground of wonder and astonishment, what an  
argument of love and thankfulness toward God  
is this!

3 Yea what a ground and motive to humility  
should this consideration be unto us! What is  
man? what, I say, is man, in comparison to him  
that made the world? what is our strength, what  
our wit, what our goodness, what any quality or  
ability of ours, in respect to the perfection of those  
things in him? how weak, silly, narrow, poor, and  
wretched things must we needs appear to ourselves,  
when seriously we consider the immense excellencies  
displayed in the world's creation! how should this  
depress and debase us in our conceits about our-  
selves! Especially if we reflect upon our own  
unprofitableness, our ingratitude, and our injustice  
toward our Creator; how none, or how scant returns  
we have made to him, who gave unto us, and to all

<sup>u</sup> Nimis nos suspicimus, si digni nobis videmur, propter quos  
tanta moveantur.—Sen. de Ira, [II. 27, 3.]



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things for us, our being and theirs, our all and theirs ; how faint in our acknowledgments, how negligent in our services we have been ; yea how preposterously, instead of our due homage and tribute, we have repaid him affronts and injuries ; frequently opposing his will and abusing his goodness !

4 This consideration is further a proper inducement unto trust and hope in God ; and withal a fit ground of consolation to us in all our needs and distresses. He that was able to do so great things, and hath been willing to do so much for us ; he that having made all things, can dispose of all, and  
 Dan. iv. 35. *doeth* (as king Nebuchadnezzar, taught by experience, confessed) *according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ?* how can we distrust his protection or succour in our exigencies ? This consideration good men have been wont to apply to such purposes : *My help*, saith the Psalmist, *cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth* : well might he be assured, having so potent and faithful an aid : and, *Happy*, saith he again, *is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help ; whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made heaven and earth ; the sea, and all that therein is* : happy indeed he surely is ; no disappointment or disaster can befall him, who doth with reason confide in him that made the world, and can manage it to his advantage. The prophet Jeremiah begins his prayer thus : *O Lord God, behold thou hast made heaven and earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.* The

Ps. cxxi.  
2;  
cxxxiv. 8;  
cxlvi. 5, 6.

Jer. xxxii.  
17.

creation of the world is such an experiment of God's power and goodness, as may support our faith in all encounters ; so that we should not think anything so difficult, but that God is able, nor so high, but that God is willing to perform it for us, if it make toward our real good. SERM.  
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5 Finally, This consideration ministereth a general incitement unto all obedience ; which from God's production of all things doth appear, upon several accounts, due and reasonable : all other things do constantly obey the law imposed on them, insist in the course defined to them ; and shall we only be disobedient and refractory, irregular and exorbitant ? shall all the hosts of heaven most readily and punctually obey God's summon ? shall the pillars of heaven tremble, and be astonished at his reproof ? shall the sea with its proud waves be curbed and confined by his decree ? shall fire and hail, snow and vapour, and stormy winds, (such rude and boisterous things,) fulfil his word ? as they are all said to do ; and shall we be unruly and rebellious ? we, who are placed in the top of nature, for whom all nature was made, to whom all nature serves ; shall we only, of all things in nature, transgress against the Author and Governor of nature ? Isai. xlviii.  
13;  
xl. 26.  
Job ix. 5,  
6;  
xxvi. 11;  
xxxviii. 1.  
Jer. v. 12.  
Ps. cxlviii.  
8.

But I leave the further improvement of this grand point to your meditation, concluding with the exhortation of that Angel in the Apocalypse : *Fear God, and give glory to him ; worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water :* even to him be all obedience, and adoration, and praise for ever and ever. *Amen.* Rev. xiv.

And in Jesus Christ.

## SERMON XIII.

OF THE TRUTH AND DIVINITY OF THE  
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

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EPH. I. 13.

*In whom ye also (trusted), having heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.*

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THAT our Religion in gross is true and agreeable to reason, is a ground upon which the truth of its single doctrines and articles of faith doth lean; it is therefore requisite that it first be well supported, or that we be thoroughly assured thereof. Being therefore engaged at other times to discourse upon the particular points of Christian doctrine, which suppose this general one; I shall take occasion collaterally in these exercises to insist upon this subject; supposing in those, what in these we shall endeavour to prove; so both avoiding there such grand digressions, or the treating upon matters not directly incident; and supplying here what seems necessary or useful to the confirmation of our faith.

Now in the words I did now read, St Paul styles the Christian doctrine (and in many other places of Scripture it is also so called) *The word of truth*, (that is, a most true doctrine,) and *The Gospel of our salvation*, (that is, a message brought

from heaven by our Saviour and his Apostles; in which the ways and means of attaining salvation, (that is, of that best happiness which we are capable of,) the overtures thereof from God, and the conditions in order thereto required from us, are declared.) And that we have reason to entertain it as such, I shall immediately address myself to shew.

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It was anciently objected by Celsus\* and other adversaries of our Religion, that Christianity did exact from men *ψιλήν καὶ ἄλογον πίστιν*, a *bare groundless faith*; did impose *νόμους ἀναποδείκτους* *laws incapable of proof*, (that is, as to the goodness and reasonableness of them;) did inculcate this rule, *Μὴ ἐξέταζε, ἀλλὰ μόνον πίστευε*, *Do not examine or discuss, but only believe*; that it debarred inquiries and debates about truth, slighted the use and improvement of reason, rejected human learning and wisdom, enjoining men to swallow its dictates, without chewing, or any previous examination concerning the reason and truth of them.

The ground of this accusation was surely a great mistake, arising from their not distinguishing that belief, whereby we embrace Christianity itself in gross, from that belief, whereby in consequence to the former we assent to the particular doctrines thereof: especially to such as concern matters supernatural, or exceeding the reach of our natural understanding to penetrate or comprehend. For as to the first kind, that belief whereby we embrace Christianity itself, as true in the gross; I say, it is nowise required upon

\* Orig. con. Cels. [Lib. i.] pp. 8, 9.

Πίστευσον εἰ σωθῆναι θέλεις, ἢ ἀπιθί.—Lib. vi. 283.

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such terms ; our Religion doth not obtrude itself upon men in the dark, it doth not bid men to put out their eyes, or to shut them close ; no, nor even to wink, and then to receive it : it rather obliges them to open their eyes wide, to go into the clearest light ; with their best senses to view it thoroughly, before they embrace it<sup>b</sup>. It requires not, yea it refuses, ordinarily, a sudden and precipitate assent ; admitting no man (capable of judging and choosing for himself) to the participation thereof, or acknowledging him to be a believer indeed ; till (after a competent time and means of instruction) he declares himself to understand it well, and heartily to approve it. Never any Religion was so little liable to that censure ; none ever so freely exposed itself to a fair trial at the bar of reason ; none ever so earnestly invited men to consider and weigh its pretences ; yea, provoked them, for its sake and their own, (at the peril of their souls, and as they tendered their own best good and safety,) to an *εὐγνώμων ἐξέτασις*, an equal and discreet examination thereof. Other Religions<sup>c</sup> have for their justification insisted upon the examples of ancestors, the prescriptions and customs of times, their large extent and prevalence among multitudes of people, their establishment by civil laws, and countenance of secular powers, (arguments wholly extrinsical and of small validity,) declining all other test or trial of reason : yea,

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Orig. in Cels. Lib. III. p. 142.

<sup>c</sup> Ὅ ταῦτα πιστεύσας οὐχ ἀπλῶς, οὐδὲ ἀλόγως, ἀλλὰ κρίσει καὶ πληροφορίᾳ, χάρισμα εἴληφεν ἐκ Θεοῦ.—Const. Apost. VIII. [Cot. Pat. Apost. Tom. I. p. 388.]

<sup>e</sup> Hæ sunt religiones, &c.—Lact. Instit. II. 7.

it is remarkable how Celsus, and others who made the foresaid objection, did contradict and confute themselves, affirming men ought without scruple to conform in opinion and practice to the Religion prescribed by the laws of their country, be they what they will, never so absurd or dishonest<sup>d</sup>:

Δεῖ φυλάσσειν τὰ εἰς κοινὸν κεκυρωμένα, *Things established by common authority must be observed*:

and, Τὰ παρ' ἐκάστοις ὀρθῶς ἀν πράττειτο ταύτη δρώμενα, ὅπη ἐκείνοις φίλον<sup>e</sup>, *Things are everywhere rightly done, being done according to the fashion of each place*. Such were the rules and maxims those men urged. And this was, indeed, exacting

irrational belief; a stifling men's reason, and muzzling their judgments; this was a method enforcing men blindly to yield consent to errors and inconsistencies innumerable. But the teachers and maintainers of Christianity proceeded otherwise; confiding in the pure merit of their cause, they warned men to lay aside all prejudices; to use their best understandings; in a case of such moment, to apply themselves to an industrious and impartial search of the truth: let one for the rest speak their sense: *Oportet in ea re maxime, in qua vitæ ratio versatur, sibi quemque confidere, suoque judicio ac propriis sensibus magis niti ad*

<sup>d</sup> Quæ omnia sapiens servabit tanquam legibus jussa, non tanquam Diis grata.—Sen. apud Aug. de Civ. Dei, vi. 10. [Opp. Tom. vii. col. 160 B.]

Omnem istam ignobilem Deorum turbam, quam longo ævo longa superstitio congegavit, sic (inquit) adorabimus, ut meminerimus cultum ejus magis ad morem, quam ad rem pertinere.—Ibid.

Sed iste, quem philosophia quasi liberum fecerat, tamen quia illustris populi Romani Senator erat, colebat quod reprehendebat, agebat quod arguebat, quod culpabat adorabat.—Aug. de Seneca. Ibid.

<sup>e</sup> Orig. con. Cel. [Lib. v. p. 247.]

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*investigandam et perpendendam veritatem; quam credentem alienis erroribus decipi tanquam ipsum rationis expertem: dedit omnibus Deus pro virili portione sapientiam, ut et inaudita investigare possent, et audita perpendere*<sup>†</sup>: We ought especially, says he, every one of us in that matter, which chiefly concerns our manner of life, to confide in ourselves; and rather with our own judgment and our proper senses strive to find out and judge of the truth, than believing other men's errors to be deceived, like things void of reason: God hath given all men a competent share of wisdom, that they might both search out things not told them, and weigh what they hear. So especially just and candid was Christianity in its first offering itself to the minds of men. It propounds, indeed, and presses, as evident in itself, the worth and consequence of the matter; but refers the decision on either part (so far as concerns every particular man) to the verdict of that reason and conscience, with which to such purposes God hath induced every man. And that it can proceed no otherwise appears further, from the nature of that faith it requires: it commends faith as a great virtue, and therefore supposes it both voluntary and reasonable<sup>‡</sup>; it promises ample rewards thereto, and so implies it a work not of necessity or chance, but of care and industry; it declares infidelity to be very blameable, and threatens severe punishment thereto; why? because it signifies irrational negligence or perverseness.

<sup>†</sup> Lact. Instit. II. 8.

<sup>‡</sup> Ἐξίς προαιρετικῇ μετ' ἀληθοῦς λόγου, ἐκούσιος συγκατάθεσις.—Clem. Alex. [?]

In fine, Christianity doth not inveigle any man by sleight, nor compel him by force, (being indeed commonly destitute of those advantages; nor being able to use them, if it would,) but fairly by reason persuades him to embrace it; it doth not therefore shun examination, nor disclaim the judgment of reason; but earnestly seeks and procures the one, cheerfully and confidently appeals to the other: *Examine all things; hold fast that which is good: Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God: See that no man deceive you: Be always ready, with meekness and respect, to give to every one that demands it of you an account of the hope in you.* These are the maxims which Christianity goes upon in the propagation and maintenance of itself.

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1 Thess. v.  
21.  
1 John iv.  
1.  
Matt. xxiv.  
4.  
Eph. v. 6.  
1 Pet. iii.  
15.

Indeed after it hath convinced men of its truth in general, having evidenced the truth of its fundamental principles, it then requires a full and cordial assent, without exception, to its particular doctrines, grounded upon or deduced from them. When, I say, it hath, to the satisfaction of a man's mind, with solid reason made good its principles; it then enjoins men to surcease further scruple or debate concerning what it teaches or draws from them; which is a proceeding most reasonable and conformable to the method used in the strictest sciences: for the principles of any science, being either demonstrated out of some higher science, or evidenced by fit experiments to common sense; and being thence granted and received, it is afterward unlawful and absurd to challenge the conclusions collected from them; so if it have been proved and acknowledged that our principles are true, (for



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instance, that God is perfectly veracious, and that Christian Religion hath his authority, or attestation to it,) it will then be a part of absurd levity and inconsistency to question any particular proposition evidently contained therein ; and in this sense or in these cases it is true, indeed, that Christianity doth engage us to believe simply and purely, doth silence natural reason, and condemn curious inquiry, and prohibit dispute, especially to persons of meaner capacities or improvements. And thus, I take it, those Christians of old were to be understood, who so much commended immediate faith, excluded reason from being too busy in matters of Religion, discountenanced that curiosity which searched into, and would needs sound those inscrutable mysteries which our Religion teaches. Our Religion then will allow (yea it invites and exhorts) an infidel to consider and judge of its truth, although it will not allow a Christian to be so vain and inconstant, as to doubt of any particular doctrine therein ; seeing by so questioning a part, he in effect renounces the whole, and subverts the foundation of his faith ; at least ceases thereby to be a steady Christian. I might then well invert our adversaries' discourse, and offer it as a good argument of our Religion its truth, that it alone among all Religions, with a candour and confidence peculiar to truth, calls us to the light, is willing, yea desirous, to undergo trial ; I add, yea challenges, as its due from all men, and demands it of them as a necessary duty, to hear it, to consider it seriously, to pass sentence upon it ; for as commonly error and groundless conceit, being conscious of their own weakness, are timorous and suspicious, and thence ready to decline

John iii.  
20, 21.

all proof and conflict of reason ; so truth, knowing its own strength, is daring and resolute ; enters boldly into the lists, being well assured (or hopeful) of good success in the combat.

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Which proceeding, proper to Christianity, is in itself very plausible, and may well beget a favourable prejudice on its side ; and that it is not confident without reason, will appear upon our examining the principles and grounds on which it stands. The first principle of Christianity (common thereto and all other Religions) is, that there is one God, (sovereign and transcendent in all perfections ; the Maker and Governor of all things). The next (which also no Religion doth not acknowledge) is, that God is perfectly veracious, so that whatever appears to be asserted, or attested to by him, is certainly true ; which principles (by reasons I hope proper and sufficient) I partly have proved, and partly shall hereafter upon occasion shew. A third is, that God is the author of the Christian doctrine and law ; that he hath revealed this doctrine to mankind, and confirmed it by his testimony ; that he hath imposed this law upon us, and established it by his authority. This principle (being the foundation and sum of our faith) involves matter of fact ; and consequently, being not evident immediately in itself, doth (for a full conviction of a man's mind, and producing therein a solid persuasion) require a rational probation ; and that it may appear we believe it like reasonable men<sup>b</sup>, not (as Pagans and Mahometans, and those of

<sup>b</sup> Μάθωμεν τοίνυν οὕτω πρὸς Ἕλληνας διαλέγεσθαι, ἵνα μὴ ὦμεν ὡς θρέμματα καὶ βοσκήματα, ἀλλ' ὦμεν παρεσκευασμένοι περὶ τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν ἐλπίδος.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. III. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 258.]

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other sects do,) upon wilful resolution, or by mere chance, as also for settling the ground of particular articles comprehended under this, I shall endeavour to shew the reasonableness thereof; advancing my discourse by several steps and degrees.

I. I observe first, that it is reasonable to suppose, that God should at some time or season fully and clearly reveal unto men the truth concerning himself, and concerning them, as he and they stand related to each other; concerning his nature and will, concerning our state and duty, respectively: the nature and attributes of God, the nature and qualities of man, being compared, do persuade thus much.

It is apparent to common experience, that mankind being left to itself (especially in matters of this kind) is very insufficient to direct itself; that it is apt to lie under woful ignorance, to wander in uncertainty, to fall into error, to possess itself with vain conceit, to be abused with any sort of delusion, which either the malice of wicked spirits, or the subtlety of naughty men, or the wildness of its own fond passions and desires can put upon it or bring it under; it is consequently exposed to all those vices, dishonourable, hurtful, and destructive to its nature; and to all those miseries, which from ignorance or error, from vice and wickedness, do naturally spring; especially to an estrangement from God, and an incapacity of his love and favour. The two only remedies of all these mischiefs, natural light and primitive tradition, how little they did avail to cure them; how the one was too faint in itself, and easily lost in mists of prejudice from ill education and bad

custom, prevailing generally; how the other (besides its other defects) soon was polluted, and, indeed, quite spoiled by adulterate mixtures of fond, impure, and vile superstitions, woful experience doth more than enough evince. We see, that not only the generality of mankind did sometime lie in this sad condition, but that even the most elevated and refined wits (those among men who by all possible improvement of their reason did endeavour to raise themselves from this low estate; to rescue their minds from the common ignorance, the mistakes, the superstitions and follies of the world) could by no means in any good measure attain those ends; for what did their earnest inquiries or their restless studies produce, but dissatisfaction and perplexity of mind? wherein did their eager disputations conclude, but in irreconcilable differences of opinion, and greater uncertainties than were when they began? Most were plunged into a desperate scepticism, (a doubt and diffidence of all things;) none arrived higher than some faint conjectures on some unsteady opinions concerning those matters of highest consequence; such notions as were not effectual enough to produce in them a practice, in any good measure, suitable to the dignity of man's nature, to the duty he owes to God, to the capacities man hath of doing and receiving good; from which due glory to God or much benefit to man did accrue.

Ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν, *They were made vain* (or, they were frustrated, deluded, befooled) *in their reasonings* and disputes; the result of their busy speculations was, that *their foolish heart was darkened*; so darkened, that with all the light they had, they could not see anything; at

Rom. i. 21.  
Eph. iv.  
17, 18.

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1 Cor. i.  
21.

Rom. i. 21.

least not clearly discern what chiefly it concerned them to know; *The world by wisdom* (by all the wisdom it could get) *did not know God*; did not acquire a requisite measure of knowledge in Divine things: did not however know him so, as to glorify him; as to thank him for the benefits received from him; as to bring forth worthy fruits of piety and virtue. So much St Paul observed of them; and not he alone did observe it, but even themselves were sensible of this their unhappiness<sup>1</sup>; whence so many complaints concerning the blindness and infirmity of man's mind, concerning the obscurity and uncertainty of things, concerning the insuperable difficulty of finding truth, concerning the miserable consequences from these, do occur among them.

Ps. xxxiii.  
5;  
civ. 24.

Now this being the natural state of men, destitute of Divine conduct and assistance; do they not (I pray) greatly need another light to guide them in this darkness, or to bring them out of it; a helpful hand, to free them from these inconveniences? and is it not reasonable to suppose, that God, who is alone able, will also be willing in due time to afford it? He, who in nature is most benign and bountiful, most pitiful and gracious; whose goodness fills the earth, and whose mercy is over all his works; he, who bears to man the special relation of a Father, and bears to him a suitable tenderness of affection and good-will; he, all whose attributes seem concerned in engaging him upon this performance; not only his goodness to instigate him, and his wisdom to direct him, but even his justice in some manner to oblige him thereto.

Hinc causa mali mortalibus ægris  
Naturam nescire Dei.

I His goodness: *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?* Yea; though it is unnatural and unusual, it is yet possible she may, because nature in her is not unalterably constant and the same; but the immutable God cannot so cease to be mindful of, to be compassionate toward his children. That gracious ear cannot hear mankind groan so dolefully under bitter oppressions; that pitiful eye cannot behold his own dear offspring, the flower of his creation, lying in so comfortless, so remediless distress, without feeling some pity, without being moved to reach some relief; such notes surely cannot be grateful, such spectacles cannot be pleasant to him, nor can he then forbear long to provide means of removing them from his presence. We esteem it want of goodness (yea an effect of very bad disposition) not to direct a bewildered traveller, not to relieve, if we can, even a stranger fallen into great distress: and if we being in such degree bad, are inclinable to perform such good offices, how much more ready may we suppose him, who is goodness itself, (goodness infinite and absolute,) to do the like for all mankind, so much needing his guidance and help! He who hath settled our outward estate in so advantageous a posture, who hath made provisions so various and ample for the needs and conveniences (yea for the pleasure) of our bodies, would he have so little care over our better part, and leave our souls so slenderly furnished, letting them pine, as it were, for want of spiritual sustenance? How can we think his good providence defective in so main, so principal a part thereof? Thus doth

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Isai. xlix.  
15.

**SERM.** Divine goodness (to my apprehension) very strongly  
**XIII.** confirm our supposition.

**Vid. Ezek.**  
**xvi. 6—14.**

2 And his wisdom enforces the same: God made the world to express his goodness and to display his glory; and his goodness who can be sensible of, his glory who can perceive, who can promote, but man? but he who is endued with reason, enabling him to reflect upon the good he feels, to admire the excellency he discovers, to render grateful acknowledgments for the one, to utter acclamations of praise to the other? which purposes yet will be utterly (or at least in great measure) frustrated, should God for ever suffer men to continue in such ignorance, doubt, or mistake concerning himself; if men are not fully persuaded, that he made the world and governs it, how can they pay those due homages of dread to his glorious power, of admiration to his excellent wisdom, of love to his transcendent goodness? This grand theatre would, as it were, stand useless, and all the wonders acted thereupon would appear in vain, should there be wanting a spectator; should man be altogether blind or heedless; yea man's faculty itself, that his seeing faculty of mind, would signify nothing, were there not a light rendering things visible to him. Common sense hath dictated to men, that man is capable of shewing respect, of performing duty and service to God, that also God requires and expects them from him; the same declares, that God best knows what kinds of service, what expressions of respect best please him. Reason tells, that God would have man act in the best manner, according to the design of his nature; that he would have the affairs of men

proceed in some good order; that he even desires earnestly the good of men, and delights in their happiness: and if so, it is reasonable to suppose, that being most wise he should dispose fit means for accomplishing those ends; for securing himself, as it were, from disappointment; that therefore he should impart to men a competent knowledge of himself, should declare his good-will and pleasure to them, should reveal both the best way of their serving him, and the best means of their attaining happiness to themselves. So Divine wisdom grounds an argument for our supposition.

3 God's justice also seems not a little to favour it: every good governor thinks it just to take care that his subjects should understand his pleasure, and be acquainted with his laws; he causes them therefore to be solemnly promulgated, that all may take notice; if any of them by long disuse are become unknown, he revives the knowledge of them by new proclamations; to quicken obedience he propounds fit rewards, and deters from disobedience by menacing suitable punishments, knowing man's nature, resty and unapt to move without these spurs: and is it likely the sovereign Governor and Judge of all the world should observe less equity in his administrations? that he should neglect any means necessary or apt to promote his subjects' performance of their duty, to prevent the breaches of his laws? He that loves righteousness above all, he that so earnestly desires to be duly obeyed, he that infinitely delights in his subjects' good; can he fail sufficiently to declare his will, to encourage men to comply with it, to terrify them from transgressing it? will he suffer his laws to



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remain unknown, or uncertain; will he not consider the infirmities of his subjects, will he leave any fair apology for disobedience? No, the superlative justice of God seems to persuade the contrary.

Acts x. 38.  
Eph. ii. 2.

4 I might add, that generally it seems unbecoming the Majesty Divine, that he should endure the world, his kingdom, to continue under a perpetual usurpation and tyranny; to suffer that his imperial throne should be possessed, his authority abused, his name insulted over, by enemies and rebels against him, (by evil spirits, whether those of hell or those on earth;) that a cruel fiend, that a cursed ghost, that a brute beast, that a chimera of man's fancy should be worshipped, while himself is forgotten and neglected, is dishonoured and despised; that iniquity and wickedness (with all the filthy brood of ignorance and error) should everywhere flourish and domineer, while righteousness and virtue lie prostrate, and are trampled upon: this surely the King of Glory, the great Patron of goodness, will not permit to be; sooner rather may we conceive, that, to remove these indecencies and these mischiefs, he would presently turn the world into a desert and solitude, or pour a deluge of water over the face of the earth, or with flames of vengeance consume it into ashes.

We cannot, indeed, judge or determine concerning the special circumstances or limits of God's dealing toward man in this particular; concerning the time when, the manner how, the measure according to which, God will dispense those revelations of himself: those depend upon mysteries of counsel and wisdom surpassing our comprehen-

sion. That God should for a while connive at men's ignorance, and suffer them to grope after Divine truth; to try them, as he did the Israelites in the wilderness, how they would behave themselves in that state; to prove how they would use their talent of natural light, to make them sensible of their own infirmity, to shew them whence all their welfare must proceed, on whom all their happiness depends, to make them more able to value, more desirous to embrace the redress vouchsafed them; as also, to demonstrate his own great clemency, longsuffering, and patience; that, I say, for such purposes, and others unsearchable by our shallow understanding, God should for some time forbear with a full evidence to declare all his mind to men, is not so strange or unlikely; but that for ever, through all courses of time, he should leave men in so forlorn a condition, in such a depth of ignorance, such perplexity of doubt, such captivity under sin, such subjection to misery, seems not probable, much less can it seem improbable that he hath done it: it cannot, I say, in any reason seem misbecoming the goodness, wisdom, or justice of God, clearly to discover to us, what he requires us to do, what good he intends for us, what way leads to our happiness, how we may avoid misery. This consideration, if it do not prove peremptorily, that God cannot but sometime make such a revelation, nor that he yet hath actually done it, (forasmuch as we cannot reach the utmost possibilities of things, nor are fit judges of what God must necessarily do; although to my apprehension this sort of reasoning, with due caution used, subsisting in general terms, and not over precisely applying

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Acts xvii.  
27, 30;  
xiv. 16.  
Deut. viii.  
15, 16.  
Exod. xvi.

Vid. Gen.  
xv. xvi. &c.

**SERM.** it to particular cases, implicated by circumstances  
**XIII.** and specialities not falling under our judgment,  
 hath great force;) yet it removes all obstruction to  
 our belief, and disposes us with more readiness to  
 admit the reasons which follow: for it being not  
 improbable, yea, according to the reason of the  
 thing, very probable, that he should do it, we have  
 cause with attention and expectation of success on  
 this hand to regard the arguments that pretend to  
 prove he hath done it.

This is the first step of our Discourse, at which  
 we shall stop for the present.

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And in Jesus Christ.

## SERMON XIV.

OF THE IMPIETY AND IMPOSTURE OF PAGANISM  
AND MAHOMETANISM.

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EPH. I. 13.

*In whom ye also (trusted), having heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.*

THAT the Christian doctrine is what St Paul SERM.  
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here calls it, a word of truth, and did proceed from the God of truth, is the proposition we are endeavouring to verify and persuade. To that purpose we did first discourse, that it is very probable God should sometime clearly and fully reveal his mind to men, concerning matters relating to his own glory and service, their goodness and happiness.

II. I now proceed another step, and assert, that no other revelation of that kind and importance hath been made; that no other Religion, which hath been or is now in being, can with good probability pretend to have thus proceeded from God; so as by him to have been designed for a general, a perpetual, a complete instruction and obligation of mankind. There have appeared but three pretences thereto; that of ancient Paganism, that of Mahometanism, and that of Judaism, (for

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the more particular pretensions of enthusiastical impostors have been subordinate either to Christianity itself, or to one of those; and besides having found no considerable progress or continuance in the world, nor countenance, as it were, from Providence, are not pertinent to this consideration, besides that they are all generally disclaimed;) but that none of those three pretences are well grounded, I shall, examining each briefly, shew: (briefly, I say, for I need not insist on them largely, the matter having passed so many good pens, especially that excellent one of Grotius; however, it falling in my way and method, I shall offer what hath concerning it occurred to my thoughts).

For the first, ancient Paganism; it did, indeed, (in the parcels thereof, or by retail) pretend to a kind of divine revelation; that it derived its notions and its forms of practice from the direction of invisible powers, given to single persons or places, in several ways (by immediate apparition, by prophetic inspiration, by significant events or prodigies;) but it did not, nor could pretend to any one uniform revelation from the sovereign God, solemnly delivered and directed to all mankind; which is an argument, not only that those pretended revelations were imperfect and insufficient to the ends propounded, but also false and counterfeit: for we may well suspect those edicts which are clancularly set up in corners, and which run not in the king's name, nor are marked with his royal signature, to have proceeded from impostors or from rebels; especially if the matter of them doth not advance, but depress his authority; doth not promote, but prejudice his interest; doth

not comport with, but contravene his pleasure, otherwise declared. And such was the manner, SERM.  
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such the matter of those Pagan revelations. Put the whole body of that Religion (if I may so call it) together, and you have nothing but a lump of confusion and inconsistency, of deformity and filthiness, of vanity and folly, little as may be therein tending to the reverence of God, or to the good of man; to the promoting virtue and goodness in human conversation, to the breeding love and good-will in men toward one another, to the maintaining justice, peace, and good order in societies; much apt to produce the contrary effects. It was not, I say, ever one simple or uniform, one fixed or constant thing, but, according to difference of place and time, various and mutable\*; diversly shaped and modelled, according to the fancy and humour, design or interest of the state that allowed it, the priests that managed it, and the people that received it; a plain sign, that (excepting some general scattered notions deduced from ancient tradition) it did wholly proceed from human device, or from a worse cause, the suggestion of evil spirits, abusing the fondness and pravity of men. Survey it, and what shall you find therein, but a bundle of idle, ill-contrived, incredible, and inconsistent stories, (arguing nothing of truth or sincerity, little of wit or discretion in those who invented them;) those attended by practices foolish, lewd, and cruel; unworthy of human nature, contrary to common sense and

\* Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum  
Odit uterque locus, quum solos credat habendos  
Esse Deos, quos ipse colit.—Juv. Sat. xv. [36.]

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honesty? Their worship (that of the supreme Lord being neglected,) you will see directed towards objects most improper and unbecoming: to the ghosts of dead men; men in their lives (if we may trust the reports of their devoutest adorers) famous for nothing so much as for vicious enormities, for thefts and rapines, for murders and parricides, for horrid lusts, adulteries, rapes, and incests; and such persons, alive or dead, what good or wise man would not rather loathe and despise, than worship or respect? to somewhat, though not otherwise, yet in degree of nature, worse than those, even to brute beasts; to the most vile, the most mischievous of them, (dogs, serpents, crocodiles;) to pay veneration unto which, how unspeakably abject a mind doth it argue! Yea they stooped lower, even to creatures inanimate, to the stars and elements, to rivers and trees, and other such things, which we see acting by natural necessity, not yielding any signification of understanding, of sense, of life, in them; which therefore, so far inferior to us in nature, how sottish a baseness was it to adore! nay, they descended to a lower degree, if it may be, of folly, dedicating temples and offering sacrifices to things even void of subsistence, to mere qualities and accidents of things, to the passions of our minds, to the diseases of our bodies, to the accidents of our lives. Who would think any man could be so mad as to reckon impudence, that odious vice; a fever, that troublesome disease; or fortune, (that unaccountable name of nothing, which wise men so little trust, and fools so much complain of,) among things Divine and venerable? Can I mention anything worse than all these,

which the degenerate ignorance and naughtiness of man hath crouched to? Yes, (with a folly of all most wretched and deplorable,) they fawned upon, they obeyed, they offered their dearest pledges of life and fortune to the sworn enemies, as of God and goodness, so of their own good and welfare, to the very cursed fiends of hell: whom, if they had not been extremely blind and senseless, by the quality of those rites and mysteries they suggested, (so bloody and cruel, so lewd and foul,) they might easily have detected to be so. Such objects as these was their devotion spent upon, to these they paid their respect, in these they reposed their confidence. And was such a Religion likely to proceed from God? was it like to produce any glory to him, or any benefit to man? From such thorns, what fruits can we hope should sprout of good life, of sound morality? what piety toward God, what justice, truth, or goodness toward man; what sobriety or purity in themselves, can we expect should arise from such conceits and such practices? surely no other than those which St Paul describes in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, and in the second of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and St Peter, which History plainly shews to SERM. XIV. 1 Ep. iv. 3. have been no slanderous imputations upon Gentilism. If any good did appear in the conversation of some men who followed that Religion, it is not to be imputed to the influence of that, but to some better cause; to the relics of good nature; to the glimmerings of natural light breaking forth in some, and by their precept or example conveyed to others; to the necessary



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experience concerning the mischiefs of vice and advantages of virtue; or perhaps also to secret whispers and impressions of Divine grace upon some men's minds, vouchsafed in pity to them and others, whom they might teach or lead into ways somewhat better than those common ones of extreme wickedness and folly: to these, I say, or such causes, all instances of practice in any measure innocent or commendable may rather be ascribed, than to that Religion, which was much apter to corrupt and debauch, than to better or civilize men; for with what intention soever they were spoken, there was not much of real calumny in those words of Lucretius,

Sæpius illa  
Religio peperit scelerosa, atque impia facta<sup>b</sup>.

But it is needless to discourse much against that which hath no reasonable patron, and which scarce any wise man, when it was in fashion, did seriously think to have had any truth or reality in it. Plato, you know, often inveighs against the inventors of those beastly fables in Heathen Theology, (upon which yet all the economy of their religious practice did depend;) Aristotle<sup>c</sup> attributes the constitution of those Religions to the subtlety of statesmen: there is none of the Fathers, I think, or any other disputer against Heathenism, who hath more directly or earnestly oppugned it

<sup>b</sup> [1. 84.]

<sup>c</sup> Metaph. xi. 8. [Παραδέδοται δὲ παρὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων καὶ παμπάλαιων ἐν μύθου σχήματι καταλειμμένα τοῖς ὕστερον, ὅτι θεοὶ τί εἰσιν οὗτοι καὶ περιέχει τὸ θεῖον τὴν ὅλην φύσιν. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ μυθικῶς ἤδη προσήκται πρὸς τὴν πειθῶ τῶν πολλῶν καὶ πρὸς τὴν εἰς τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὸ συμφέρον χρῆσιν.]

than Pliny hath<sup>d</sup>. There were few, or none, of the Philosophers, who did not signify his dislike or contempt of the vulgar opinions and practices concerning Religion<sup>e</sup>; what Cicero saith of one part, the wiser sort did judge of all: *Tota res est inventa fallaciis, aut ad quæstum, aut ad superstitionem, aut ad errorem*<sup>f</sup>; *The whole business was deceitfully forged either for gain, or out of superstition, or from mistake.* They did indeed, most or all of them, in their external behaviour, comply with common practice, out of a politic discretion, for their safety and quiet sake: but in their inward thoughts and judgments they (as by many passages in their writings doth appear) believed nothing, nor liked any thing in it: they observed those things, as Seneca said, *Tanquam legibus jussa, non tanquam diis grata*<sup>g</sup>; *Not as acceptable to the gods themselves, but as commanded by the laws of their country.* And, indeed, this dissimulation was so notorious, that even the vulgar discerned it; and therefore seldom the wiser men were reputed among them the most religious, but liable to

<sup>d</sup> Hist. Nat. Lib. ii. cap. 7.

<sup>e</sup> Vid. Plut. de Superst. [Φιλοσόφων δὲ καὶ πολιτικῶν ἀνδρῶν καταφρονέουσιν, ἀποδεικνύντων τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ σεμνότητα μετὰ χρηστότητος καὶ μεγαλοφροσύνης, &c.—Opp. Tom. vi. p. 639. Ed. Reisk.]

<sup>f</sup> De Divin. ii. [41, 85.]

Hæc et dicuntur et creduntur stultissime, et plena sunt futilitatis, summæque levitatis.—Balbus in Cic. de Nat. Deor. ii. [28, 70.]

<sup>g</sup> Apud Aug. de Civ. Dei, vi. 10. [Opp. Tom. vii. col. 160 c.] Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, iv. 32. [col. 112 d. Quod utique non aliam ob causam factum videtur, nisi quia hominum velut prudentium et sapientium negotium fuit populum in religionibus fallere, et in eo ipso non solum colere, sed imitari etiam dæmones, quibus maxima est fallendi cupiditas.] vi. 10. [col. 160 c. d.]

**SERM.** accusation for impiety; and some of them, ye know,  
**XIV.** suffered extremities upon that score, who could  
not altogether conceal that contempt, which the  
vanity of popular superstitions had begotten to-  
ward them in their hearts.

I might add, that all those Pagan Religions did vanish together with the countenance of secular authority and power sustaining them; which shews plainly enough, that they had little or no root in the hearty belief or approbation of those who professed them.

And thus much may suffice, I suppose, to declare, that Paganism did not proceed from Divine revelation, but from human invention or suggestion diabolical.

I shall only adjoin, that the considering this case of Heathens may be of good use (and to that use, indeed, St Paul hath largely applied it) in confirming what we before urged, the great need of some full and plain revelation to the world of God's mind, in order to God's glory and man's good; as also it is of singular use, (which also the same Apostle frequently did put it to,) by the contemplation thereof, to discover our great obligations to bless and thank God for his great mercy in revealing his heavenly truth to us, from whence we are freed from errors and mischiefs so deplorable; which otherwise, from human infirmity and the Devil's malice, we should easily (and in a manner necessarily) have incurred.

That pretence was ancients in standing; but there hath, even since Christianity, started up another, Mahometanism, which, if not upon other accounts, yet in respect to its age, and to the port

it bears in the world, demands some consideration; for it hath continued a long time, and hath vastly overspread the earth: neither is it more formidable in its looks, than peremptory in its words; vaunting itself to be no less than a complete, a general, an ultimate declaration of God's pleasure, canceling and voiding all others that have gone before. But examining both the substance and circumstances thereof, considering the quality of the instruments by whom, of the times when, it was introduced; of the places where, of the people who first or afterward did receive it; the manner of its rise, progress, and continuance; as also the matter it teaches or enjoins; we shall not find stamped on it the genuine characters of a Divine original and authority, but have great reason to deem it a brood of most lewd and impudent cozenage. In times of great disturbance and confusion, when barbarous nations, like torrents, did overflow the world, and turned all things upside down; in times of general corruption and disorder in men's minds and manners, when, even among Christians, ignorance and superstition, dissension and uncharitableness, impiety and iniquity did greatly prevail; in a very blind and obscure corner of the earth, among a crew of wild thieves and runagates, (such have those Arabians been always famed and known to be,) this sect had its birth and fosterage; among those fierce and savage overrunners of the world it got its growth and stature; into this sort of people, (being, indeed, in its constitution well accommodated to their humour and genius,) it was partly insinuated by juggling tricks, partly driven by seditious violence; the first author hereof being a person,

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according to the description given of him in their own legends, of no honest or honourable qualities, but having all the marks of an impostor ; rebellious and perfidious, inhuman and cruel, lewd and lascivious, of a base education, of a fraudulent and turbulent disposition, of a vicious life, pretending to enthusiasms, and working of wonders ; but these such as were both in their nature absurd and incredible, and for their use vain and unprofitable : at such a season and in such a soil, by such means and by such a person, (abetted by associates like himself, whom his arts or their interests had inveigled to join with him,) was this Religion first planted ; and for its propagation it had that great advantage of falling in the way of barbarous people, void of learning and civility, and not prepossessed with other notions or any sense of Religion ; who thence (as mankind is naturally susceptible of religious impressions) were capable and apt to admit any Religion first offering itself, especially one so gross as this was, so agreeable to their furious humours and lusts. Afterward being furnished with such champions, it diffused itself by rage and terror of arms, convincing men's minds only by the sword, and using no other arguments but blows. Upon the same grounds of ignorance and force it still subsists, neither offering for, nor taking against itself any reason ; refusing all examination, and, upon extreme penalties, forbidding any dispute about its truth ; being, indeed, so far (whether out of judgment or fatal instinct) wise, as conscious to itself, or foreboding, that the letting in of a little light, and a moderate liberty of discussing its pretences, would easily overthrow it. Now that Divine

wisdom should choose those black and boisterous times to publish his will, is as if the king should purposely order his proclamation to be made in a tempestuous night, when no man scarce dared to stir out, nor any man could well see what was done, or hear what was said : much fitter surely to that purpose were serene and calm day, a time of general civility and peace, like that of Augustus Cæsar. That the declaration of God's mind should issue from the deserts of Arabia, (that den of robbers,) is as if the king should cause his edicts to be set up in the blindest and dirtiest nook of the suburbs : the market-cross surely, or the exchange, (the place of most general and ordinary concourse,) such as, in respect to the world, was the flourishing empire of Rome, were more convenient, and wisely chosen for that purpose. That, passing over the more gentle and tractable part of his people, a prince should send his laws to a rabble of banditti ; should pick out for his messenger a most dissolute varlet, attended with a crew of desperate ruffians, resolved to buffet and rifle all they met, were an odd way of proceeding : to communicate his pleasure unto the better and more orderly sort of people, (such as were the subjects of that well-governed empire ;) by persons of good meaning, mild disposition, and innocent behaviour, (such as were the Apostles of our Lord ;) in a quiet and gentle manner, (such as these only used ;) would surely better become a worthy prince. Thus even the exterior circumstances of Mahometanism, (both absolutely and in comparison,) belonging to its rise, its growth, its continuance, (so full of indecency, of iniquity, of

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inhumanity,) ground strong presumptions against its divinity; or rather, plainly demonstrate, that it could not proceed from God, whose truth cannot need such instruments or such courses to maintain it, whose goodness certainly abhors them. But further, if we look into the matter and inward frame thereof, we shall find it a mass of absurd opinions, odd stories, and uncouth ceremonies; compounded chiefly of the dregs of Christian heresies, together with some ingredients of Judaism and Paganism confusedly jumbled, or unskilfully tempered together. From Christian heresies it seems to have derived its negative doctrines, opposite to Christianity; as for instance, when allowing Christ much respect, it yet denies his being the Son of God, and that he did really suffer; rejecting his true story, it affixes false ones upon him: as also some positive ones; for example, that unreasonable opinion, so much misbeseeeming God, that God hath a body, (Mahomet, forsooth, once touched his hand, and felt it very cold,) might be drawn from the Anthropomorphites; that doctrine concerning the fatal determination of all events, (so prejudicial to all Religion, subverting the foundations of justice between God and man, man's free choice in serving God, God's free disposal of rewards suitable to men's actions,) they probably borrowed from the Manichees, a sect that much obtained in those eastern parts. The Jew contributed his ceremonies of circumcision and frequent purgations by washing, his abstinence from swine's flesh, his allowance of polygamy and divorce: I might add, that perhaps from him they filched that proud, inhuman, and uncivil humour

of monopolizing Divine favour and good-will to themselves ; so of restraining their own kindness and respect to persons of their profession, or sect ; condemning, despising, and hating all the world beside themselves ; calling all others dogs, and adjudging all to certain damnation ; and, which is more, affirming that all of their belief, how wicked soever their lives have been, shall at length assuredly partake of salvation : so partial do they make Almighty God, so addicted to a mere name and outward show, feigning him, as in shape so in passions, human and like themselves. Indeed, in this main part of Religion, a true notion of God, his nature, his attributes, his method of providence, their doctrine is very peccant, representing him, in his nature, and actions, very unworthily. Their descriptions concerning the state of men after death, (that main and principal part of Religion, which gives life and vigour to the rest,) whence can we better deduce its original, than from the pagan notions or stories of Elysium and Hades ? What better pattern can we find, whence that paradise of corporeal delight, or rather of brutish sensuality, should be transcribed, which any man sees how poor an encouragement it is, how unworthy a reward, to virtue ; yea, how much it is apt to detract from, to discourage all performances of reason and honesty ? The like we might say of the punishments (which in due correspondence to the rewards they propound) they only or chiefly inflict upon the body ; the main part, it seems, of which a Mahometan man consists. And must he not be very stupid, who can suffer himself to be persuaded, that such conceits

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(conceits favourable, indeed, to pleasure, and indulgent to the flesh, but contrary to virtue, prejudicial to the spirit and reason of man) should come from the God of wisdom and holiness? Further, how Mahomet was inspired, his stories alone will evince; stories patched up out of old histories corrupted, mangled, and transplac'd; interlard'd with fabulous legends, contrary to all probable records of history, (the names, places, times, and all the circumstances whereof he most unskilfully changes and confounds,) yea repugnant to the nature and possibility of things; so that in a manner every tale he tells is an evident argument of an ignorant and an impudent impostor; and he that so blunders and falsifies about matters of fact, who will trust him in matters of right and reason? which things, if it were worth the while, might by various instances be shew'd; and you may every where receive satisfaction therein. The like might be said concerning its multitude of silly ceremonies, grounded on no reasonable design, nor subservient to any purpose of virtue; the institution whereof no man therefore, without injury to the Divine wisdom, can impute thereto. But I shall only add two further considerations upon this matter: one, that whatever is good or plausible in this Religion, (such as are some precepts of justice and charity, although these confined among themselves,) may reasonably be supposed taken from Christianity, which being senior in standing, may (in points wherein both agree) well go for the mistress; and however, that, upon the score of such doctrines or laws, we have no reason to think this Religion came from God; for

why should he reveal that again, which in a larger extent, upon better grounds, with more advantage, he had declared before; which also then was commonly embraced and acknowledged? I also observe, that this Religion, by its own free concessions, doth evidently destroy itself; for it admits Christianity once to have been a true doctrine, proceeding from and attested to by God: but Christianity did ever declare itself to be a general, perpetual, perfect, and immutable rule of faith and practice; that never any accessions thereto, any alterations thereof, ought to be made or admitted; that whatever spirit, coming after it, should offer to innovate, or pretend to new discoveries contrary to, or different from it, must be suspected of delusion, foretelling and forewarning against such endeavours that should appear, as fallacious and mischievous: this, it appears, (by the writings of those who first planted Christianity, writings which no man in his wits can question to be theirs; being through a continual uninterrupted course of times, from the beginning, by general consent of both friends and adversaries, acknowledged and attested to as so; all characters within them, imaginably proper for that purpose, confirming the same; as also by the current tradition of their disciples, immediate and mediate, extant in records unquestionable, and by all other means conceivable,) this, I say, it most plainly appears, was one grand doctrine and pretence of Christianity at first, which the Mahometans acknowledging originally true and divine in the gross, must consequently grant itself to be an imposture.

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And thus much seems sufficient to demonstrate that Religion not to be of a Divine extraction. I shall next proceed to consider the pretences of Judaism, and to shew that neither it was such a perfect revelation as we proved it probable God would vouchsafe to make. But that shall be the subject of another Discourse.

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And in Jesus Christ.

## SERMON XV.

### OF THE IMPERFECTION OF THE JEWISH RELIGION.

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EPH. I. 13.

*In whom ye also (trusted), having heard the word of  
truth, the Gospel of your salvation.*

THAT it is probable God should vouchsafe to SERM.  
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mankind a full and clear declaration of his mind and will concerning their duty and their welfare, I did shew: that Paganism and Mahometanism, without reason and truth, did or does pretend thereto, I also briefly discoursed: I now proceed to examine the plea which Judaism puts in, and to make good, that neither it is well-grounded, (which, as the cause deserves, I shall do somewhat more largely). The Jewish Religion we acknowledge had its birth from the revelation and appointment of God; its truth and its goodness we do not call in Heb. vii.  
18, 19.  
question: but yet looking into it, we shall find it in many respects defective, and wanting the conditions due to such a revelation as we require. For it was not universal, (neither being directed to, nor fitted for the nature and needs of mankind;) it was not full and complete, it was not designed to be of perpetual obligation or use.

I. First, I say, this revelation was not general; not directed to, or intended for to instruct and

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oblige mankind: itself expressly affirms so much; the whole tenor and frame thereof shews it; so do all the circumstances of its rise and progress. That it was intended peculiarly for that small nation, possessing a very inconsiderable portion of the earth; distinguished, and indeed, as it were, concealed from the rest of mankind both on purpose and in effect; for it so remained for many ages (till the Macedonian first, and afterward the Roman conquests opened the world, and disclosed them) hid in a solitary obscurity; even so far as to scape the observation of the most inquisitive surveyors of the earth, the most curious searchers into the customs of all people, (as of Herodotus for instance, who, nicely describing the places and manners of the people all about them, could not discern them, and takes no notice of them, although for their peculiar manners otherwise most remarkable, and deserving his mention;) appears by express passages in their law and holy writings; *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation; and his judgments they have not known them.* It is plainly affirmed, that God did make that discovery of his will and mind peculiarly to that people, and to no other<sup>a</sup>; *I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine,* saith God to the Jews; *So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth,* saith Moses in his address to God; *Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; The Lord hath chosen thee to be a special people unto*

Ps. cxlvii.  
19, 20.

Lev. xx.  
26.  
Exod.  
xxxiii. 16.

Deut. vii.  
6;  
xiv. 2.

<sup>a</sup> They were not to marry, not to trade, to converse, &c.—Vid. Grot. Annot. in Evang. p. 130. [Amst. 1641.]

himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth, saith Moses to that people : which passages (together with divers others of the same import) being used to engage and encourage a singular obedience, do plainly say, that God transacted with that people singly and separately from all other ; taking them on purpose, as it were, into a corner, at a good distance, and beyond hearing of others, that he might there signify alone to them his pleasure, peculiarly concerning them. Yea to this purpose, of maintaining a distance and distinction from the rest of mankind, divers of their laws were appointed ; as not only the nature of such laws doth imply, but words annexed to them sometimes express ; *I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people ; ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean.* Whence St Paul calls their law *μεσότηχον φραγμοῦ*, a partition wall, that fenced that nation, and severed it from others ; and an enmity, being framed to set them in distance and variance from the rest of men. That whole business also of this constitution is frequently styled a covenant, made, not between God and mankind, but between God and that single nation ; a covenant in formal terms mentioning them, and them only ; sealed with marks and characters peculiar to them ; requiring conditions and duties possible or proper only for them to perform ; exhibiting promises only suitable to them ; propounding rewards which they only were capable to receive, and punishments which they only could undergo. *Hear, O Israel*, is the usual style, according to which those laws are directed ; *I am the Lord thy God, which brought*

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Lev. xx.  
24, 25.

Eph. ii. 14.

Dent. iv.  
13;  
xxix. 14,  
25, &c.;

iv. 1;  
v. 1;  
vi. 3, &c.  
Ps. lxxxi.  
8.

**SERM.** *thee out of the land of Egypt*, is the introduction  
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Deut. iv.  
 13.  
 Exod.  
 xxxiv. 28.

Deut. xvii.  
 15;  
 i. 16.  
 Lev. xxv.  
 46, &c.  
 Deut. xv.  
 3, 12;

xvi. 1, 16;  
 xiv. 21, &c.  
 Exod.  
 xxiii. 14,  
 &c.

to the Decalogue itself, (which among all parts of that law looks fairest toward a general importance and obligation; which yet is so specially directed, and is, indeed, peculiarly called the covenant between God and that people; viz. *synecdochically*, as being the principal part directive of their duty). In the body of the laws itself, there is often made a distinction between them who were bound to observe it, and others that were not; between brethren and strangers; between Hebrews and aliens; with duties suited and limited in regard to that distinction, (as in the cases of remitting debts, releasing servants, exacting use, and the like :) there are enjoined duties, which others could not properly or decently perform; such as observation of feasts in commemoration and thankfulness for mercies vouchsafed to that nation; as also others which could not be observed by all men with any possibility or convenience; such as those of repairing thrice a year to one certain place, established for God's worship; of bringing tithes and oblations thither, and the like; neither was the number of Priests and Levites, set apart for God's service, proportioned otherwise, than in respect to that one people. The encouragements also and rewards promised to obedience do incommunicably pertain to them, as also the discouragements from, and punishments for disobedience; a long and prosperous enjoyment of the land of Canaan was the meed set before them, if they should obey and make good their part of the covenant; a dispossession thereof, or affliction in it, was the punishment threatened, if they should presume to disobey and

violate those engagements; *Ye shall walk in all the ways, which the Lord your God hath commanded you; that ye may live, and that it may be well with you; and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye possess. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.* Such were the promises exciting to obedience; and the threatenings deterring from disobedience were answerable, as everywhere in their law and story is visible.

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Deut. v.  
33;  
vi. 3, &c.

I may also hereto add, that as the laws and rites of this Religion were designed only for this people, as they did only agree to their circumstances; so they were only suited to their inclinations and their capacities; their inclinations, which were very stubborn and perverse; their capacities, which were very low and gross, as their own prophets do upon many occasions affirm and complain; being dissenterious and repugnant to the common humour and genius of mankind: so experience discovered them to be, when they became more apparent and observable; *Judæorum mos absurdus, sordidusque; The Jewish way of life is uncouth and sordid*, was Tacitus his censure<sup>b</sup>; and, *They run counter to all men*, was St Paul's imputation on that people; to which the general conceit of men concerning them did agree; so little plausible or probable was their way, so liable to dislike and contempt: which

<sup>b</sup> Hist. v. 5.

Moses.....novos ritus, contrariosque cæteris mortalibus, indidit.—Id. ibid. [4.]

Cætera instituta sinistra, fœda, pravitate valere.—[5.]



SERM. argues it unfit to be commended by the God of  
 XV. wisdom to the generality of mankind.

By which and many other like considerations obvious enough may appear, that this dispensation was not (either according to its nature or in its design) general, or such as respected the main body of mankind, but rather very particular and restrained; designedly restrained to the obligation and use of one place or people, if compared to the world of men, inconsiderably narrow and small; (the fewest of all people God himself says they were;) that, in fine, this constitution had only the nature of a municipal law, imposing burdens and indulging privileges upon one city or territory; not of a common civil sanction, established for the obligation, use, and benefit of the whole commonwealth, or empire subject to the Almighty King.

It is not therefore in reason to be taken for such a revelation, as we argued needful for us, and  
 Ps. cxlv. 9. expectable from him, *Who*, as the Psalmist, as reason, as experience tells us, *is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works*; from him, who is the common Father of all, and, as St  
 Acts xvii. 26. Paul expresseth it, *Hath made of one blood πάντες ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων, the whole nation and commonwealth of mankind*; from him, who cannot be in affection anywise fond or partial, a respecter of persons  
 Rom. ii. or of nations, as St Paul in the second to the  
 Acts x. 34. Romans, and St Peter in the Acts also implies; from him, who is not only the Maker, but, as our  
 1 Tim. iv. 10. Apostle also styles him, *The Saviour of all men*; and, as even the Hebrew Wise Man asserts, *Careth  
 7; xi. 23, &c. for all alike; being desirous that all men should  
 1 Tim. ii. 4. be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*;

not willing that any should perish, but that all men should come to repentance; from him, who is not only φιλεβραῖος, or φιλέλλην, a lover of Jews, or of Greeks; but φιλόανθρωπος, a lover of men; and φιλόψυχος, a lover of souls; who, lastly, is not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, as St Paul urges this argument; and as also the reason of the thing and the voice of nature doth declare<sup>o</sup>; from this God, I say, so disposed, so related toward us all, so equally concerned in regard to us; so impartial in his affection, so unconfined in his bounty; we should have reason to expect rather no revelation at all, than one so scant, and pinched in narrow bounds; so ill proportioned to the glory due to himself, to the need and benefit of mankind. We cannot reasonably imagine, that he should contract the effects of his goodness, or the manifestation of his glory, to so slender a parcel of mankind, (no better qualified, no more deserving such special regard, than the rest; as himself, to repress their fond conceits, and probably in way of anticipation to intimate his design of further extending that favour in due season to others, who might pretend thereto with as much right and reason as themselves, doth sometime declare;) that he, who hath freely dispensed the influences of sun and stars to all alike, should cause the light of his heavenly truth to shine, as it were, but into one small closet of his spacious house; leaving all the rest, so many stately rooms thereof, encompassed with shades of ignorance and error; that he should pour down the showers of his blessings spiritual (otherwise than he

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<sup>2</sup> Pet. iii. 9.

Tit. iii. 4.

Wisd. xi. 26.

Rom. iii. 29.

Deut. ix. 4,  
&c.

Matt. v. 45.

<sup>o</sup> Οὐδεὶς Θεὸς δύσπουνος ἀνθρώποις.—Plat. Theæt. [151 c.]

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hath done those natural) upon one only scarce discernible spot of ground; letting all the world beside, like a desert of sand, lie parched with drought, overspread with desolation and barrenness.

This revelation therefore was not in this respect sufficient; wanting in its nature and design that due condition of generality and amplitude<sup>d</sup>. But,

II. Further; As this revelation was particular, so was it also partial; as God did not by it speak his mind to all, so did he not therein speak out all his mind. Our Apostle to the Hebrews chargeth it with blameableness; *Ei ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη ἦν ἄμεμπτος*, *If the first covenant had been blameless*; with imperfection, with weakness<sup>e</sup>, with unprofitableness; *Ἀθέτησις μὲν γὰρ γίνεται προαγούσης ἐντολῆς διὰ τὸ αὐτῆς ἀσθενὲς καὶ ἀνωφελές· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος*; *There is made an abolition of the precedent commandment for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof: for the law made nothing perfect*; he means all this in degree, and in comparison to what was possible, and in some respects needful. Which charge may be easily made good, *a priori*, considering both the parts thereof which direct, and those which excite to practice; together with the means and aids enabling and facilitating obedience to the laws or rules enjoined; also, *a posteriori*, if we regard the fruits and effects thereof. Surveying first, I say, the directive part, we may observe both a redundancy in things circumstantial or exterior, and a defectiveness in

Heb. viii.  
7;

vii. 18.

<sup>d</sup> Ἐπὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς ὁ νόμος ἔκειτο, ὅτε οὐ πολλὴ ἀρίστης πολιτείας ἡ ἀκρίβεια, ὅτε εἰσαγωγή τοῦ θείου ἦν, ὅτε παιδικὰ τὰ παραγγέλματα, ὅτε τὸ γάλα, ὅτε ὁ παιδαγωγός, ὅτε ὁ λύχνος, ὅτε ὁ τύπος, καὶ ἡ σκιά.—Chrys. [Orat. xciv. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 866.]

<sup>e</sup> Τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου, ἐν ᾧ ἡσθένει.—Rom. viii. 3.

things substantial and interior: there be ritual SERM. XV. institutions in vast number very nicely described and strongly pressed; the observation of times Col. ii. 21. and places, the distinction of meats and of habits, (*Touch not, taste not, handle not,*) corporeal cleans- Heb. ix. 9, 10. ings and purgations; modalities of exterior performance in sacrifices and oblations, those δικαιώματα σαρκός, (*justifications of the mere flesh*, that only concerned the body or outward man, and could not perfect the observer's conscience; could neither satisfy or edify his mind and inward man,) we see with extreme punctuality prescribed and enjoined, some of them under very heavy penalties, (of utter extermination and excision). While moral duties (duties of justice and charity, yea of temperance and sobriety itself) and spiritual devotions (so exceedingly more agreeable to rational nature, and which could not but be much more pleasing to God) were more sparingly delivered in precept, less clearly explained, not so fully urged with rational inducements, nor in a due proportion guarded with rewards. Many things were plainly permitted, or tacitly connived at, (as polygamy and divorce, some kinds of retaliation, cursing, revenge; some degrees of uncharitableness,) which even natural reason dislikes, or condemns. So faulty was that dispensation, as to the part thereof directive of life; and it was no less in that part, which promotes and secures good practice, by applying fit excitements to obedience, and fit restraints from disobedience; rightly managing those great instruments and springs of human activity, natural courage, hope, and fear. Nothing so damps men's alacrity in endeavour, as

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Deut.  
xxvii. 26.  
Gal. iii. 10.

desperation or diffidence of good success; nothing so quickens it, as a confidence or strong presumption thereof: and how then could they be very earnest in endeavours to please God, who were not assured of (yea, had so much reason to diffide in) God's placability and readiness, upon repentance, to forgive sins wilfully and presumptuously committed, such as no man surely lives altogether free from? The not opening a door of mercy seems discouraging and apt to slacken performance of duty; what was then the shutting it up close, the bolting it with that iron bar, *Cursed is he that abides not in all things written in this law to do them*; which at least will exclude assurance, will quash the hopes of mercy; will consequently enervate the sinews of care and industry in serving God? Neither were the rewards of either kind (those that spurred to obedience, those that stopped from disobedience) in measure or in kind such as the reason of things doth afford and require. They were only temporal, and chiefly corporeal or sensible<sup>1</sup>; such as belonged to the outward state of this transitory life, which neither can deserve much regard, nor are apt to have great efficacy: for who will in effect, why should any man in reason, highly value the accommodations of this short and uncertain life? who will, who should be greatly terrified with the inconveniences thereof? whom, probably, would such considerations sufficiently animate to encounter and sustain

<sup>1</sup> Ὅτε πάντα ἦν σαρκικά, καὶ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λόγος οὐδεὶς.—Chrysa. Or. xcvi. Opp. Tom. vi. [p. 881.]

Περὶ τῶν οὐρανίων οὐδεὶς οὐδέποτε λόγος ἦν, οὐδὲ μελλόντων μνήμη, &c.—Ad Olymp. β. Tom. vii. p. 80. Vid. Tom. vii. p. 16.

the perils, the difficulties, the troubles, and the disgraces, to which often the practice of virtue is exposed? whom would they guard from the enchantments of pleasure, profit, and honour, alluring men to sin? The pleasures of sense, how improper an encouragement, how unworthy a recompense are they for the labours and achievements of virtue! Incomparably better surely, more worthy of regard, and more effectual upon man's reason, more apt to produce and to promote real virtue and hearty piety, are the rewards concerning the future state of our immortal soul; which yet it is a question whether that law doth ever mention; it is plain it doth not clearly propound and apply them. Indeed, as to evident discovery concerning the immortality of man's soul, or the future state, so material a point of Religion, of so grand moment and influence upon practice, even the Gentile Theology, assisted by ancient common tradition, seems to have outgone the Jewish, grounding upon their revealed law; the Pagan priests more expressly taught, more frequently inculcated arguments drawn from thence, than the Hebrew prophets; a plain instance and argument of the imperfection of this Religion.

I subjoin, God's not thereby (in an ordinary certain way, according to any pact or promise) affording or exhibiting such interior influences of grace upon the minds of men, as, considering the natural frailty, blindness, and impotency of men, appears necessary to render them obedient to the rules of duty, to guide them in the ways of truth and goodness, to free them from error and sin, to shield and animate them against temptation; is a

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main defect in that Religion; apt to breed fear in the onset upon duty, to nourish doubt in the performance thereof, to settle despair upon a fall or defeat. It presented to men's eyes the obligation to duty, the difficulty thereof, the danger of transgressing it, but did not openly represent the means requisite to perform it. And what can be more discouraging or discomfoting, than to see oneself, upon great peril and penalty, obliged to that, which is apparently very hard, or, considering his strength, impossible, no help or support being visible? especially joining the consideration before touched, that no evasion by pardon, no rise by repentance doth appear. Whence we may well infer, that indeed, in effect, this dispensation was what St Paul calls

<sup>2</sup> Cor. iii. 7, 9. *it, διακονία θανάτου, and, διακονία κατακρίσεως, a ministry of death and condemnation; a subjection to a*  
 Gal. iii. 10. *curse; a killing letter;*  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. iii. 6. *bearing nothing less in the looks and language thereof, than certain death and unavoidable ruin; a lying under insupportable slavery, both to the guilt and punishment of sin:*  
 Gen. iv. 7. *If thou doest ill, sin lieth at the door.*

Neither in discoursing thus do we lay any misbeseeming imputation upon God, the author of that Religion; the making so imperfect a revelation nowise being disagreeable to his wisdom, his goodness, or his justice. As for a time he might withhold the declaration of his mind to all mankind, so might he, upon the same or like grounds of wise counsel, forbear to declare some part thereof to that people: no special reason appears that could oblige, that might induce him not to be reserved, as well in part to these few men, as in whole to those, all the rest of men;

yea, there be good reasons assignable, why the Divine wisdom should be then so sparing of its mind, why God should only shew his back parts, as it were, to Moses, and not let him see his face; not discover all of his nature and of his pleasure to him; why then he should seem to delight in, to lay so much stress on those carnal and ceremonious observances; why he should forbear to exact that height of spiritual duty, and not draw men to compliance with the best motives of pure reason. A dawning of light, perhaps, more became that morning of times than a meridian brightness; that infancy of the world was not, it may be, ripe for a more deep and perfect instruction; that nation, however, to whose state, to whose disposition and capacity those laws and institutions were adapted, was very unfit for the highest and hardest lessons. For a nation it was (as from infallible hands we have it) not wise or considerate; not grave or constant; not meek or pliable; but a very stupid and heady, a very fickle and humorous, a very froward and stubborn generation of men; *They are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding,* was said of them at first by him who delivered their law, or rather by God himself who enjoined it: and, *I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee,* saith the Prophet concerning the house of Jacob; alluding, it seems, to those many passages in the law, where they are termed a stiffnecked people: incapable thence both of the finest notions and the more rigorous precepts; like children, by reason of the grossness of

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Exod.  
xxxiii. 20,  
23.

Deut.  
xxxii. 28.  
Jer. iv. 22;

Ex. 4.  
Neh. ix.

Isai. xlviii.  
4<sup>o</sup> 5<sup>o</sup>.

Deut.  
xxxii. 27.  
Exod.

xxxii. 9.  
Deut. ix.  
6, 13.  
Ps. lxxviii.  
36, 37.



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Gal. iv. 9,  
3;

iii. 24;

iv. 3.

civility hath obtained ; at least they are capable of being so, fit means being used to render them so,) SERM.  
XV. they must needs be insipid and disgustful. In the study of truth and practice of virtue, there are alluring beauties and sweetnesses ; which it cannot but displease him, who hath seen and felt them, to be diverted from, by an obligation to attend so precisely upon such an abundance of petty, circumstantial, exterior observances ; to be forced, I say, to chew such husks of things, to him, who thereby must neglect so delicious kernels, cannot but be grievous and irksome. Wiser men are never much affected with laborious and tedious pomps ; they are designed always to amuse children, and the common sort. I add, that this dispensation was suited not only to the childish fancy, but to the slavish spirit of that people ; who, having in them little of ingenuity, or willingness freely to do good, would be apt to wax not only dronish and lazy, but sturdy and insolent, had they not been kept under and inured to something of burden and toil. Such all wise men know to be the proper course of managing people of slavish temper ; but toward men of a disposition more ingenuous, tractable, and free, such as commonly men civilized and well governed are or may become, such a proceeding were incongruous ; they will either refuse to undergo such unnecessary burdens, or bear them unwillingly ; their obedience will be none, or lame, or unkindly and heartless. God therefore dealt according to wisdom with the Jews, when he imposed such burdens upon their shoulders, when he pinched their stiff necks with such yokes, when he detained them in such fetters ; so they were, and

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Acts xv.

10, 28.

Gal. v. 1;

iii. 23.

so they are truly called by our Apostles ; burdens intolerably heavy ; yokes very galling and vexatious ; fetters very strait and grievous ; which they reasonably therefore reckon it a very valuable privilege and benefit, purchased by our Saviour for us, to be loosed from. But such a dispensation could not be convenient for the rational nature in common, and for perpetuity : it neither becomes God himself, who will not without need or profit vex his creatures ; who cannot be fully satisfied with performances of so mean a sort ; who necessarily doth affect services of a more excellent nature and importance ; (those spiritual services of love, reverence, and gratitude ; of purity, righteousness, and goodness). It doth not suit man, not being apt to perfect his nature, not being able to satisfy his mind. As he, by the improvement and use of his reason, will easily discern the small worth of such performances, so will he not readily comply with them without regret ; but will soon apprehend the matter to be indeed, as St Paul represents it, that an obligation to such rites is a bond against us, which in reason he may expect to be wiped out and cancelled<sup>s</sup> ; that a law consisting of such precepts hath an enmity, or repugnance to his nature ; that such a dispensation is a pupilage, and a slavery, which he earnestly must desire to be redeemed and mancipated from.

Col. ii. 14.

Gal. iii. 24 ;

iv. 1, 3, 5,

&c.

Thus doth this revelation upon many respects, grounded on the very intrinsic nature thereof, appear partial and imperfect ; and consequently

<sup>s</sup> Ἐξαλείψας τὸ καθ' ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν, ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῶν.—Col. ii. 14.

not such as that which we reasonably may expect from the Divine wisdom and goodness. SERM.  
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It is true, which some may deem an objection against our discourse, but I should rather take for a good confirmation thereof, that God did afterward annex some labels, as it were, to this deed; that he imparted by degrees further manifestations of light and grace to that people, by the instructions, and by the exemplary practices of prophets and holy men raised up among them by his especial instinct and order; in a manner and upon occasions extraordinary. The Prophets frequently declared, that God had not much delight in those ceremonious observances; nor would accept them otherwise than as proceeding from good dispositions of mind, and as accompanied with practices of moral duty and more spiritual piety; that he chiefly did require of them hearty reverence toward himself, and submission to his will; strict justice, and tender charity toward their neighbours; meekness and patience in their behaviour; temperance and sobriety in all their conversation. By them also he discovered more of his gracious disposition, and of his merciful intentions toward them; that he would not be extremely rigorous in punishing the transgressions of his law; that he would not refuse pardon to the most grievous sins, not remain irreconcilable toward the most heinous offenders, upon their sincere repentance and amendment of life. By the practices of holy men he also shewed, that the rigour of that ceremonious law was mitigable; that in some cases its obligation might be relaxed and its observance dispensed with; that a service more refined and rational was especially acceptable

Isai. lxvi.  
3;  
i. 11, 12,  
13, &c.  
Mic. vi. 7.  
Ps. l. 8, 9,  
&c.;  
li. 16;  
l. 14;  
li. 6, 17.  
Isai. i. 16,  
17;  
lviii. 6.  
Mic. vi. 8.  
Hos. vi. 6.

Ps. cxxx.  
3, 4;  
Isai. i. 18;  
lv. 7.  
Ezek. xviii.  
21;  
xxxiii. 12,  
19

Matt. xii.  
3.  
Ps. li. 6,  
17.

**SERM.** to God; that he loved a purer devotion, a perfecter  
**XV.** righteousness, a higher charity than such as the letter of their law prescribed. By them also he intimated, which their devotions plainly infer, that he not only exacted such duties, but was ready to afford them his assistance to the performing them; by teaching and admonishing them within; enlightening their minds, and inflaming their affections; directing, exciting, and quickening them to obedience. Thus did that morning of Divine knowledge, from the first dawning, by degrees grow more lightsome; yet never arrived to a perfect daylight; the shadows were not quite dispersed; the whole horizon of heavenly truth was not disclosed thereby. Even those arbitrary and extraordinary dispensations of further instruction are so many good arguments, that God did not primarily intend the Jewish law for a complete delivery of his mind; his reserving so much to be upon occasion detected, implied that more still might rest behind; accordingly as indeed we see, that the future state, and immortality itself was not by the prophets fully brought to light; that the better covenant, established upon better assurances, was not yet revealed; that all means requisite for the glory of God, for the good of man, were not thoroughly provided for.

Heb. viii.  
6;  
xi. 13, 40.

Of which conclusion we shall add this one further probation, that Judaism did not serve, in effect, sufficiently to better men's lives; to qualify a competent number of men for God's favour, or for their own happiness; by disposing their minds to any tolerable degree of true sanctity, piety, and righteousness acceptable to God, profitable to human

society, perfective of man's nature. It is a point SERM.  
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that St Paul in his Epistle to the Romans insisteth much upon, and excellently applies to this same purpose. The Jews were highly conceited of their way, scorning the rest of men as altogether ignorant of God's will, and incapable of his favour; but St Paul represses their arrogance, by shewing the difference was not so great, as they imagined, between them and others, not even in those respects; for that the special revelation, which they were so Rom. ii. proud of, had not produced effects considerably better in them, than the light of reason and the law of nature (means so despicable in their esteem) had brought forth in others; which charge being made good, it is evident they had no reason to prize their way so much; or to confide therein, as perfect; as thoroughly, in the best manner, and in reasonable measure sufficient to qualify them for God's favour, or to bring them into a state of happiness; yea, it is plain, upon that supposition, in some respects their way had the disadvantage, and made their condition worse than that of other men; rendering their faults more grievous and inexcusable, more provoking God's displeasure against them; especially seeing, upon the tenor of their Religion, they had scarce any better ground to presume of pardon or impunity, than other men had from instincts of nature, from rational conjecture. Now that such a charge upon them is no slander, we need no other probations, than what the continual stream of their own histories doth represent concerning their manners; than the many full and plain testimonies of their own prophets concerning them; than the extreme punishments by Divine justice inflicted

**SERM.** upon them; than the common reputation they have  
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continually had among men, grounded upon experience. What is their history but one continued tragedy, as it were, setting out the various strange rebellions and apostasies of that people, with the miserable consequences proceeding from them? What do their prophetical writings contain beside pathetical expostulations, severe reproofs, dreadful comminations of judgment upon them, for their prodigious impieties, iniquities, and lewdnesses; general in extension over all persons, excessive in degree, by no means curable or corrigible? *Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,* (Jerusalem, that place of universal concourse, the heart of that nation, the special seat and sanctuary of their Religion,) *see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth,* and *I will pardon it,* says Jeremiah. *There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof,* (of Jerusalem,) *like a roaring lion ravening the prey; her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things; her princes are like wolves; the people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery: and I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none,* saith Ezekiel: and the rest frequently harp upon the same thing. But these Prophets, you will say, lived in unhappy times; so circumstantiated, that no Religion could have much prevailed upon men's minds and lives; such as make every Religion liable to the same exceptions: well, but Isaiah, one would think, lived in better times;

**Ezek. xxii.**  
 25—30.

for how many better kings had that nation, that more strictly practised or earnestly promoted piety, SERM.  
XV. than Hezekiah? yet, *Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquities, a seed of evil doers, were they, it seems, even then; the land was defiled under the inhabitants thereof; the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot even to the head there was no soundness in the body of that nation.* Yea, when did that Religion flourish in greater vigour and strength, when had it more advantage of exerting its best virtue, than in the peaceful and prosperous times of that great and mighty, that good and zealously pious prince, king David? yet, even in his reign, according to his own observation and testimony, *They were, generally, corrupt, and did abominable works; they all were gone aside, and were altogether become filthy; there was none that did good, no not one.* But we need not urge particular instances, since we have it so often affirmed in gross, that the manners of that people, from first to last, were constantly naught and offensive to God: *The children of Israel, and the children of Judah, saith God himself in Jeremiah, have only done evil before me from their youth: and again; Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have even sent you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them; yet they hearkened not unto me.* The Law, although by extraordinary persons, in fittest opportunities, with utmost vehemence and diligence inculcated and urged upon them, proved continually ineffectual to produce the fruits of piety and righteousness. The same you may see confessed by Ezra; and

Isai. i. 4,  
5, 6.

Ps. xiv. 1,  
3.

Jer. xxiii.  
30;

vii. 25;  
xvi. 12;  
xi. 7, 8.

Ezra ix. 7.



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Neh. ix.

not only acknowledged, but evidently demonstrated by Nehemiah, in a punctual narration, deduced from the beginning to his time, in the ninth chapter of that book. Again ; The heavy calamities by Divine justice so often inflicted, so long continued upon them ; and, at last, God's so visible utter dereliction and disowning them, do also sufficiently declare what their deserts, and what their qualities have been ; as also what good may ever be expected from them. For as God never punishes grievously without a proportionate cause, so he never quite deserts, but in a desperate case, when no competent emendation may be expected. He is not wont to lop off the branches, but when they grow dead and barren ; he never cuts down the tree, while there is any hope of fruit. This providence therefore toward that people shews, that in God's esteem that Law is to be laid aside, as an instrument grown useless, and unfit for his purposes ; unfit to serve his glory, to further men's good.

I add ; that through all course of times their manners have not procured in a manner from any men any good-will or respect ; but, indeed, the common dislike, contempt, and hatred of men : they have always (since well known and observed in the world) been reputed a sort of people not only above all men vain and superstitious, addicted to fond conceits and fabulous stories, but extremely proud and arrogant, churlish and sour, ill-natured and false-hearted toward all men ; not good or kind, yea not so much as just or true, toward any but themselves ;

Non monstrare vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti ;  
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> Juv. Sat. xiv. [102.]

*Apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium*<sup>1</sup>. Such are the obvious characters of them, such were their humours noted to be; humours not only implausible, but really blameable, deservedly offensive and odious; being contrary to the common sense, to the natural ingenuity of man. They have been long, as we see them now to be, partly for the vanity of their conceits, partly for the baseness of their minds and manners, and partly also for the wretchedness of their condition, the scorn and obloquy of all nations.

Now the tree, which hath always bore such fruits, (so unsavoury, so unwholesome,) we have no reason to admire, to esteem excellent and perfect. It might be good for those times, when men willingly did feed on acorns, on crabs, on bramble-berries; but cannot so well serve now, when higher improvements of reason, when philosophy and learning, by a general influence upon the world, have prepared the palates of men to relish, their stomachs to digest more delicious and more wholesome fare. But,

III. I proceed to shew the third defect, which I at first observed in this Religion, that it was not designed for perpetual obligation and use. As it was particular in respect of the persons to whom it was directed, whom it obliged; as it was partial and incomplete in its frame, so it was, according to its design, temporary and mutable. This conclusion we might infer from what hath been said concerning the narrow extent, and concerning the

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Hist. v. [5.] Vid. Grot. de Jure Bell. et Pac. Lib. II. Cap. 15. 9. 3. [Vol. II. p. 139. Camb. 1853.]

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intrinsic imperfection thereof; for supposing a new general and perfect revelation made to mankind, (such as we asserted probably should be,) that would naturally swallow and void those which are particular and imperfect; as comprehending them, it would render them useless; as supplying the defects, correcting the defaults, or removing, paring away the superfluities of them, it would discover them unfit for continuance. As rivers run into the sea, as shadows flee before the sun, so these small and shallow, these dusky and faint revelations would discharge themselves into, would vanish before a complete and universal one. Nothing in nature or in providence that is scant, or defectuous, can be stable and lasting. Thus, I say, is this a conclusion, a consequence of those which preceded; but we have another more convincing sort of evidence to prove it by, (most valid *ad homines*,) even by many pregnant intimations; yea many express remonstrances and predictions, that God did intend in due time to introduce a great change in affairs of this kind; to refine and reform the state of things; to break open those enclosures, and to remove those bars of separation; to enlarge the bounds of his dominion, and to receive all nations into the fold of his most special care and love. In fine, that he would dispense a general full revelation of his mind and will, of his grace and favour to mankind; such as should not be consistent with that particular and partial law, such as implies a disannulling thereof for obligation, and disabling it for use. The holy writings of that people acquaint us, that God intended to raise up another Prophet

Mal. iii. 1,  
3.  
Heb. ix.  
10.

Deut. xviii.  
15, 18.  
Acts iii.  
22.

(for extraordinariness and eminency) like to Moses, which should have words by God put into his mouth; new words surely, new revelations from God; for why should he with that solemnity be sent to utter stale matters? whom they should, upon peril of their lives and welfare, be particularly obliged to hearken (that is, to yield attention and obedience) unto. That the days should come, when the Lord would make a new covenant with the house of Israel, different from that which he made with their fathers after their delivery from Egypt; not to be written upon stones, but impressed upon men's hearts; in regard to which passage we may with the Apostle to the Hebrews well argue; *If the first had been faultless, and designed to abide in force, there would have been no place found for the second;* and that, by speaking of a new covenant, he antiquated, or declared his intention to antiquate the old one.

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Jer. xxxi.  
31.

Heb. viii.  
7, 13.

That time should be, *When they should say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither should it come to mind, neither should they remember it, neither should they visit it;* they are the words of the Prophet Jeremiah, concerning better times to come; wherein God should give them pastors according to his own heart, which should feed them with knowledge and understanding; but in a way, it is evident, altogether different from the Jewish institution; without any regard to the ark of their covenant, that seat and emblem of God's especial presence among them.

Jer. iii. 16;

iii. 15.

That another priesthood should infallibly (for God swore so much) be established, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek;

Ps. cx. 4.

**SERM.** not appointed to offer carnal sacrifices, but to  
**XV.** impart spiritual benedictions.

**Isai. lxi.**  
**18, 21.**

That time should be, when God would gather all nations and tongues, and they should come and see his glory; and out of them God would take (that which the Mosaical constitution would not anyway permit) for priests, and for Levites.

**Ps. cxxxii.**

**13.**

**Mic. iv.**

**1, 2, 7, &c.**

**Joel ii. 32;**

**iii. 16.**

That there should appear a Zion; a mountain seated above all mountains, (visible and conspicuous to all the world,) wherein God would place his perpetual residence, the seat of his worship, of his especial presence and influence, to which all nations should flow, or willingly resort, to learn God's will, and walk in his ways; which Zion could not be that literal one, long since desolated and disregarded; and which, however, did it stand in repute, could be no convenient receptacle, or resort for all the world; it is surely another spiritual Zion, or mystical rock, which is prophesied of.

**Isai. lxi.**

**17;**

**lxvi. 22.**

That God will create new heavens and a new earth; a thoroughly new world, or new state of things; such as that the former should not be remembered, nor come into mind.

**Joel ii. 28.**

That God would pour his spirit of prophecy upon all flesh; (although we see the prophetic spirit hath long deserted the Jewish nation, not

**Hab. ii. 14.**

so much as any pretence thereto remaining.) *That the earth should be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;* (Judaism surely is not this knowledge, which never did, nor is ever likely to fill the earth.)

**Mal. i. 11.**

That *From the rising of the sun, to the going down thereof, God's name should be great among the*

*Gentiles; and in every place incense should be offered unto his name, and a pure offering.* (In every place incense, acceptable to God, should be offered; not only at Jerusalem, to which the Jewish service was confined.) That a time was determined *To finish transgression, and make an end of sins; to make a reconciliation for iniquity, and to introduce everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy; and to anoint the most Holy.*

That God would send him, so much needed and desired by all nations, to whom the gathering of the people should be; the Sun of righteousness, arising with salvation in his wings; the Redeemer that should come to Zion; the Messenger of the covenant, whom God would give for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritage; the righteous Branch, to be raised up unto David; to reign and prosper, executing judgment and justice in the earth; whose name should be called, *The Lord our Righteousness*; whom God would anoint to preach good tidings to the meek, and bind up the broken-hearted, &c.; that is, in fine, God in due time would send the Messiah, to enlighten the world with a perfect instruction; to reveal God's will, and declare his mercy to mankind; to erect an universal spiritual kingdom in the minds and hearts of men, reducing them to fuller knowledge and to better obedience of God. These places of Scripture, to which many others might be added, do sufficiently evince, that the Mosaical dispensation was in the design thereof mutable and transitory; that God intended, what the Apostle affirms

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Dan. ix.  
24

Hag. ii. 7.  
Gen. xlix.  
10.  
Mal. iv. 2.  
Isai. lix.  
20;

xlix. 8.

Jer. xxiii.  
5, 6.

Isai. lxi. 1.

Heb. vii.  
18.

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effected by our Saviour, an abrogation of the precedent command for its weakness and unprofitableness. Thus doth God's design concerning the abolition of this Religion appear by verbal testimonies ; the same we see also declared by real effects: his providence hath made good his word ; he hath not only disobliged men from that Religion, but hath manifestly discountenanced it ; yea, hath disabled even the most obstinate adherents in opinion and will thereto from the practice and exercise thereof, according to its primitive rules and prescriptions. Long is it (for above fifteen hundred years) since they, exiled from their ancient country, and scattered over the world, have wanted a place whither to resort, wherein to perform those most weighty parts of worship and service to God, oblation of sacrifices, incense and tithes ; their tribes being confounded, the distinction of priesthood and people seems taken away ; all the mysterious emblems of God's special presence, all the tokens of God's favour and endearment to them are embezzled and quite lost ; nothing is left substantial or solemn in their Religion, which if they would they could put in practice : all that they retain of their ancient institution is the observation of some petty formalities, in matters of less importance ; which also they have so blended and corrupted with impure mixtures of their own device and forgery, false and impious opinions, ridiculous and uncouth ceremonies, idle and absurd stories, that we may justly suppose genuine Judaism nowhere to be found ; that it cannot be, nor is, indeed, anywhere practised.

So that what reason shewed fit to be, what God had declared should be, that experience doth attest to be done; the cessation and abolition of that way of Religion, both as to obligation and use.

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So I pass over this second step of my intended Discourse: that no other Religion, excepting Christianity, which hath been, or is in being, can reasonably pretend to have proceeded from God, as an universal, complete, and final declaration of his mind and will to mankind: such as we argued it probable, that so wise a God, so just a Lord, so gracious a Father would sometime afford to his poor miserable creatures and children, the sons of Adam.

I have two great steps yet to take: one, that Christianity is in itself a doctrine and law endued with the forementioned conditions; in all respects worthy to come from God, apt to promote his glory, and procure man's benefit. Another, that it *de facto* did proceed from God, was attested to by him, and established by his authority. Which propositions I shall hereafter, by God's grace, endeavour to prove.

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And in Jesus Christ.

## SERMON XVI.

OF THE EXCELLENCY OF THE CHRISTIAN  
RELIGION.

I COR. II. 6.

*We speak wisdom to those which are perfect.*

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I Cor. iii.  
1, 2.

THE meaning of these words, upon viewing the context, and weighing the scope of St Paul's discourse, I take to be in effect this ; that however such parts of the Christian doctrine, which St Paul discovered unto those whom he began to instruct therein, the milk which he gave the babes in Christ to drink, especially as propounded, proved, and persuaded in so plain and simple a manner, without advantages of subtle reasoning or elegant language, might seem to persons really ignorant, unskilful, and dull of apprehension, (although much conceited of their own knowledge, wit, and reach,) or to men prepossessed with contrary notions and corrupt affections, to be foolish and unreasonable : yet that the whole doctrine, such as it is in itself, being entirely disclosed unto perfect men, that is, to men of an adult and improved understanding, well disposed and capable, void of prejudicate

conceits, and cleansed from vicious dispositions, would appear wisdom; wisdom, that is, not only SERM.  
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I. The first excellency peculiar to the Christian doctrine I observe to be this; that it assigneth a true, proper, and complete character or notion of God<sup>a</sup>; (complete, I mean, not absolutely, but in respect to our condition and capacity;) such a

<sup>a</sup> Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.—Matt. xi. 27.

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notion as agreeth thoroughly with what the best reason dictateth, the works of nature declare, ancient tradition doth attest, and common experience doth intimate concerning God ; such a character as is apt to breed highest love and reverence in men's hearts toward him, to engage them in the strictest practice of duty and obedience to him. It ascribeth unto him all conceivable perfections of nature in the highest degree ; it asserteth unto him all his due rights and prerogatives ; it commendeth and justifieth to us all his actions and proceedings. For in his essence, it representeth him one, eternal, perfectly simple and pure, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, independent, impassible, and immutable ; as also, according to his essential disposition of will and natural manner of acting, most absolute and free, most good and benign, most holy and just, most veracious and constant ; it acknowledgeth him the maker and upholder of all beings, of what nature and what degree soever ; both material and immaterial, visible and invisible ; it attributeth to him supreme majesty and authority over all. It informeth us, that he framed this visible world with especial regard to our use and benefit ; that he preserveth it with the same gracious respect ; that he governeth us with a particular care and providence ; viewing all the thoughts, and ordering all the actions of men to good ends, general or particular. It declareth him in his dealings with rational creatures very tender and careful of their good, exceedingly beneficent and merciful toward them ; compassionate of their evils, placable for their offences, accessible and inclinable to help them at their entreaty, or in

their need ; yet nowise fond or indulgent to them ; SERM. XVI.  
not enduring them to proceed in perverse or wanton courses ; but impartially just, and inflexibly severe toward all iniquity obstinately pursued ; it, in short, describeth him most amiable in his goodness, most terrible in his justice, most glorious and venerable in all his ways of providence : whatever perfections in essence, state, or practice, either philosophers, (by rational collection from innate notions, or from contemplation of natural effects, or upon observing occurrences in human affairs,) or other institutions from the relics of primitive tradition, by politic reflection upon things, from other fountains, or by other means whatever, have by parts (imperfectly, obscurely, and faintly) attributed to God, all those our Religion, in a full, clear, and peremptory manner, with advantage beyond what I can express, doth ascribe and assert unto him ; not intermixing therewith (as other doctrines and institutions may be observed to do) anything unworthy of him, or misbecoming him ; adjoining nothing repugnant to that which natural light discerneth or approveth ; but shewing somewhat beyond what it can descry, concerning God's incomprehensible nature and manner of subsistence, his unsearchable counsels of wisdom, his admirable methods of providence, whereby he hath designed to commend his goodness to us, and to glorify his justice ; which sorts of truths exceeding man's reach to devise or comprehend, as it becometh God (who so far transcendeth us in wisdom and knowledge) to reveal them ; so they, wondrously conspiring with the perfections of God otherwise discernible by us, do argue or confirm the divinity of the

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doctrine, which acquainteth us with them : for a doctrine, how plausible soever, which should teach us nothing about God, that by other means could not be found out, and whose bottom common sense might not fathom, there were no urgent cause why we should derive it from heaven, or why we should not rather deem it the invention of some witty or subtle man. But such a doctrine as this, (which as it telleth us nothing about Divine things that contradicteth reason, so it informeth us many things which no understanding of man had ever conceived, none can penetrate,) we may justly presume to come from a superior wisdom, we must at least avow it worthy of God ; in the contrivances of man's wit or fancy about things of this nature, as in divers instances it hath happened, most probably many flaws and incongruities presently would have appeared ; they would have clashed with themselves, or with the dictates of common reason : that, for instance, God should out of his own bosom send down his eternal Son to partake of our nature, and appear in our flesh, that with utmost advantage he might discover God's will and merciful intentions toward us, that he might set before us an exact pattern of good life ; that by his obedience and patience he might expiate our sin, and reconcile God to mankind ; that he might raise in us a hope of, and lead us in the way to happiness ; this, indeed, is a mystery, and a depth of wisdom, which we should never have thought of, nor can yet thoroughly sound by thinking, which we better may admire, than we can understand : but neither doth good reason disallow it, nor can disprove it ; yea, good reason so far confirmeth it, as it cannot

but admit it to import nothing but that which is SERM.  
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plainly true and most credible, the immense goodness and justice of God; concerning which nothing ought to seem strange or uncouth to us, since even by the care expressed in matters of ordinary providence Divine goodness appeareth so unaccountably vast and high, that upon consideration thereof worthily might Job and the Psalmist exclaim;  
*What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?* Job vii.  
*and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?* <sup>17.</sup>  
*Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of* Ps. cxliv.  
*him? or the son of man, that thou makest such* <sup>3.</sup>  
*account of him?*

Now thus to instil into the minds of men a right and worthy notion of God, is palpably a great excellency of any doctrine or Religion: for beside that a true knowledge of God (even barely considered as in way of theory most perfective of our understanding, it being conversant upon the noblest object of contemplation) is in itself very desirable; and upon the same ground error in Divine things is no small evil or defect; both these, such knowledge and such error respectively, are very considerable, as having a powerful influence upon action; for according to men's conceptions about God is their practice, religious and moral, very much regulated; if men conceive well of God, they will be guided and moved thereby to render him a worship and an obedience worthy of him, and acceptable to him; if they are ignorant of him, or mistake about him, they will accordingly perform services to him, or pretences of service, which shall neither become him nor please him<sup>b</sup>; (God by such Isai. lxvi.  
3;

<sup>b</sup> Εὐλόγως, τοῖς μὲν μοχθηροῖς φάυλας ἔχειν τὰς περὶ Θεοῦ Isai. lxvi.  
3; 13, 14.

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misconceptions being transformed into an idol, their Religion will become vile or vain superstition). And since all men apprehend the example of God a perfect rule of action, that they cannot do better than to resemble and imitate him, such as they conceive God to be, such in good measure they will endeavour to be themselves, both in their disposition and demeanour; whence infallibly the virtues and defects which lie in their notion will exert and diffuse themselves into their life.

II. A second great excellency peculiar to the Christian institution is this, that it faithfully informeth us concerning ourselves, concerning our nature, our original, our end, all our state, past, present, and final; points about which otherwise by no reason, no history, no experience, we could be well resolved or satisfied: it teacheth us, that we consist of a frail mortal body, taken from the earth and fashioned by God's hand, and of an immortal spirit, derived from heaven, and breathed out of God's mouth; whereby we understand the dignity of our nature and nobleness of our descent, our near alliance and our great obligation to God; and consequently how it concerneth us to behave ourselves, both in regard to God and toward ourselves, in a manner answerable to such a relation, worthy of such an high birth and quality: it sheweth us, that we were originally designed by a voluntary obedience to glorify our Maker, and in so doing to partake of joy and felicity from him; that accordingly we were created in a state agreeable to those purposes, wherein we were fit to serve God, and

*διανοήσεις ἀνάγκη τοῖς δὲ σπουδαίοις ἀπίστας.*—Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 841.]

capable thereby ever to continue happy: but that by our unworthy distrust and wilful disobedience we cast ourselves from thence, and lapsed into this wretched state of inward blindness, error, and disorder of outward frailty, sorrow, and trouble: it acquainteth us further, how being thus estranged from God, and exposed to the effects of his just displeasure, we are yet again, by his exceeding mercy and favour, put into a capacity of recovering ourselves, of being reinstated in a condition happy far beyond that from which we fell, by returning unto God, and complying with his will declared unto us; as also how continuing obstinately in our degeneracy and disobedience we shall assuredly plunge ourselves deeper into an abyss of endless misery: it fully representeth unto us, what shall be our future state and final doom, how it shall be suited to our demeanours and deserts in this life; what a strict trial, what a severe judgment, all our actions (even our passant words and our secret thoughts) must hereafter undergo; and how, upon the result, we shall become either exceedingly happy or extremely miserable for ever. It is, indeed, this doctrine only, which fully resolveth us about this weighty inquiry, which hath so much perplexed all men, and with so much irresolution exercised philosophers, wherein the final end and happiness of man consisteth, and what is the way of attaining it; assuring us, that it consisteth not in any of these transitory things, nor in a confluence of them all, but in the favour and the enjoyment of God, with the blessings flowing thence; that this happiness is only by a sincere and constant obedience to God's holy laws, or by the practice of such a



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piety and such a virtue which this doctrine prescribeth, to be obtained. These most important truths, so useful both for the satisfaction of our minds, and the direction of our lives, this doctrine unfoldeth: I call them truths, and that really they are such even their harmony and consistence between themselves, their consonancy with inferences from all sorts of principles, which we can apply for learning of truth, with what about these matters reason collecteth, tradition reporteth, experience doth imply, may well persuade us: for that man was first made and constituted in a happy state; that he was for his misbehaviour detruded thence; that hence he is become so very prone to vice, and so much subject to pain; that our souls do abide after death; that after this life there shall be a reckoning and judgment, according to which good men, who here are often much afflicted, shall be rewarded with joy, and bad men, who commonly prosper here, shall be requited with pain, the wisest men, upon these grounds, always have surmised; and their rational conjectures our Religion with a positive and express assertion doth establish. So great a light doth it afford (which is no small perfection thereof) to the knowledge of ourselves and our chief concernments, the objects, next to God and what concerneth him, best deserving our inquiry and information.

III. It is a peculiar excellency of our Religion, that it prescribeth an accurate rule of life, most congruous to reason, and suitable to our nature<sup>c</sup>; most conducive to our welfare and our content;

<sup>c</sup> *As ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God.*—1 Thess. iv. 1.

most apt to procure each man's private good, and to promote the public benefit of all ; by the strict observance whereof we shall do what is worthy of ourselves and most becoming us ; yea, shall advance our nature above itself into a resemblance of the Divine nature ; we shall do God right, and obtain his favour ; we shall oblige and benefit men, acquiring withal good-will and good respect from them ; we shall purchase to ourselves all the conveniences of a sober life, and all the comforts of a good conscience. For, if we first examine the precepts directive of our practice in relation to God, what can be more just, or comely, or pleasant, or beneficial to us, than are those duties of piety, which our Religion doth enjoin ? What can be more fit, than that we should most highly esteem and honour him, who is most excellent ? that we should bear most hearty affection to him, who is in himself most good, and most beneficial to us ? that we should have a most awful dread of him, who is so infinitely powerful, holy, and just ? that we should be very grateful unto him from whom we have received our being, with all the comforts and conveniences thereof ? that we should entirely trust and hope in him, who can do what he will, and will do whatever in reason we can expect from his goodness, and can never fail to perform what he hath promised ? that we should render all obedience and observance to him, whose children, whose servants, whose subjects we are born ; by whose protection and provision we enjoy our life and livelihood ? Can there be a higher privilege than liberty of access, with assurance of being favourably received in our needs, to him

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Rom. xii.  
1.

who is thoroughly able to supply them? Can we desire upon easier terms to receive benefits, than by acknowledging our wants, and asking for them? Can there be required a more gentle satisfaction from us for our offences, than confession of them, accompanied with repentance and effectual resolution to amend? Is it not, in fine, most equal and fair, that we should be obliged to promote his glory, who hath obliged himself to further our good? The practice of such a piety as it is apparently λογικὴ λατρεία, a *reasonable service*, so it cannot but produce excellent fruits of advantage to ourselves, a joyful peace of conscience, and a comfortable hope, a freedom from all superstitious terrors and scruples, from all tormenting cares and anxieties; it cannot but draw down from God's bountiful hands showers of blessings upon our heads, and of joys into our hearts; whence our obligation to these duties is not only reasonable, but very desirable.

Consider we next the precepts by which our Religion doth regulate our deportment toward our neighbours and brethren; (so it styleth all men, intimating thence the duties it requireth us to perform toward them;) and what directions in that kind can be imagined comparably so good, so useful, as those which the Gospel affordeth? An honest Pagan Historian saith of the Christian profession, that *Nihil nisi justum suadet et lenē*<sup>d</sup>; the which is a true, though not full character thereof. It enjoineth us, that we should sincerely and tenderly love one another, should earnestly desire and delight in each other's good, should heartily

<sup>d</sup> Ammian. Marc. [xii. 11, 5.]

sympathise with all the evils and sorrows of our brethren, should be ready to yield them all the help and comfort we are able, being willing to part with our substance, our ease, our pleasure, for their benefit or succour; not confining this our charity to any sorts of men, particularly related or affected toward us, but, in conformity to our heavenly Father's boundless goodness, extending it to all; that we should mutually bear one another's burdens, and bear with one another's infirmities, mildly resent and freely remit all injuries, all discourtesies done unto us; retaining no grudge in our hearts, executing no revenge, but requiting them with good wishes and good deeds. It chargeth us to be quiet and orderly in our stations, diligent in our callings, veracious in our words, upright in our dealings, observant of our relations, obedient and respectful toward our superiors, meek and gentle to our inferiors; modest and lowly, ingenuous and compliant in our conversation, candid and benign in our censures, innocent and inoffensive, yea, courteous and obliging, in all our behaviour toward all persons. It commandeth us to root out of our hearts all spite and rancour, all envy and malignity, all pride and haughtiness, all evil suspicion and jealousy; to restrain our tongue from all slander, all detraction, all reviling, all bitter and harsh language; to banish from our practice whatever may injure, may hurt, may needlessly vex or trouble our neighbour. It engageth us to prefer the public good before any private convenience, before our own opinion or humour, our credit or fame, our profit or advantage, our ease or pleasure; rather discarding a less good from ourselves, than depriving

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others of a greater. Now who can number or estimate the benefits that spring from the practice of these duties, either to the man that observeth them, or to all men in common? O divinest Christian charity, what tongue can worthily describe thy most heavenly beauty, thy incomparable sweetness, thy more than royal clemency and bounty! how nobly dost thou enlarge our minds beyond the narrow sphere of self and private regard into an universal care and complacency, making every man ourself, and all concerns to be ours! how dost thou entitle us unto, how dost thou invest us in all the goods imaginable; dost enrich us with the wealth, dost prefer us with the honour, dost adorn us with the wisdom and the virtue, dost bless us with all prosperity of the world, whilst all our neighbour's good, by our rejoicing therein, becometh our own! how dost thou raise a man above the reach of all mischiefs and disasters, of all troubles and griefs, since nothing can disturb or discompose that soul, wherein thou dost constantly reside and absolutely reign! how easily dost thou, without pain or hazard, without drawing blood or striking stroke, render him that enjoyeth thee an absolute conqueror over all his foes, triumphant over all injuries without, and all passions within; for that he can have no enemy, who will be a friend to all, and nothing is able to cross him, who is disposed to take everything well! how sociable, how secure, how pleasant a life might we lead under

° Τοιαύτη γὰρ ἡ τῆς ἀγάπης δύναμις τοὺς οὐκ ἀπολαύσαντας τῶν ἀπολαυσάντων ἐξίσως ποιεῖ χαίρειν, κοινὰ τὰ τῶν πλησίων ἀγαθὰ πείθουσα νομίζειν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιθ'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 588.]

thy kindly governance ! what numberless sorrows and troubles, fears and suspicions, cares and distractions of mind at home, what tumults and tragedies abroad, might be prevented, if men would but hearken to thy mild suggestions ! what a paradise would this world then become, in comparison to what it now is, where thy good precepts and advices being neglected, uncharitable passions and unjust desires are predominant ! how excellent then is that doctrine, which brought thee down from heaven, and, would but men embrace thee, the peace and joy of heaven with thee !

If we further survey the laws and directions which our Religion prescribeth concerning the particular management of our souls and bodies in their respective actions and enjoyments, we shall also find, that nothing could be devised more worthy of us, more agreeable to reason, more productive of our welfare and our content. It obligeth us to preserve unto our reason its natural prerogative, or due empire in our souls, and over our bodies, not to suffer the brutish part to usurp and domineer over us ; that we be not swayed down by this earthy lump, not enslaved to bodily temper, not transported with tumultuary humours, not deluded by vain fancy ; that neither inward propensions nor impressions from without be able to seduce us to that which is unworthy of us, or mischievous to us. It enjoineth us to have sober and moderate thoughts concerning ourselves, suitable to our total dependance upon God, to our natural meanness and weakness, to our sinful inclinations, to the guilt we have contracted in our lives ; that therefore we be not

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puffed up with with self-conceit, or vain confidence in ourselves, or in anything about us; (any wealth, honour, or prosperity). It directeth us also to compose our minds into a calm, serene, and cheerful state; that we be not easily distempered with anger, or distracted with care, or overborne with grief, or disturbed with any accident befalling us; but that we be content in every condition, and entertain patiently all events, yea, accept joyfully from God's hand whatever he reacheth to us. It commandeth us to restrain our appetites, to be temperate in all our enjoyments, to abstain from all irregular pleasures, which are base in kind, or excessive in degree; which may corrupt our minds, or impair our health, or endamage our estate, or stain our good name, or prejudice our peace or repose: it doth not prohibit us the use of any creature, whence we may receive innocent convenience or delight, but indulgeth us a prudent and sober use of them all, with the sense of God's goodness, and thankfulness to him, who bestoweth them upon us. Our Religion also further ordereth us (so far as our necessary occasions or duties permit) to sequester and elevate our minds from these low and transitory things, from the fading glories, the unstable possessions, the vanishing delights of this world; things, indeed, unworthy the attention, unworthy the affection of an heaven-born and immortal spirit; that we should fix our thoughts, our desires, our endeavours upon objects most worthy of them, objects high and heavenly, pure and spiritual, infinitely stable and durable; not to love the world, and the things therein; to be careful for nothing, but to cast all our care upon God's

1 John ii.  
15.  
Phil. iv. 6.  
1 Pet. v. 7.  
John vi.  
27.

providence ; not to labour for the meat that per-  
 isheth, not to trust in uncertain riches ; to have  
 our treasure, our heart, our hope, our conversation  
 above in heaven. Such directions our Religion  
 prescribeth ; by compliance with which, if man be  
 at all capable of being happy, assuredly his hap-  
 piness must be attained ; for that no present en-  
 joyment can render a man happy, all experience  
 proclaimeth ; the restless motions we continually  
 see, the woeful complaints we daily hear, do  
 manifestly demonstrate.

And who seeth not the great benefits and  
 the goodly fruits accruing from observance of  
 these laws and rules ? Who discerneth not the  
 admirable consent of all these particular injunc-  
 tions in our Religion with that general one,  
*Whatever things are true, whatever things are* Phil. iv. 8.  
*just, whatever things are honest, whatever things are*  
*pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things*  
*are of good report, if there be any virtue, or any*  
*praise, that we should mind such things, and prac-*  
 tise them ? Such, and far more excellent than I  
 am able to describe, is the rule of Christian prac-  
 tice ; a rule in perfection, in beauty, in efficacy far  
 surpassing all other rules ; productive of a goodness  
 more complete, more lovely, more sprightly than  
 any other doctrine or institution hath been or can  
 be able to bring forth ; much exceeding, not only  
 the righteousness of the blind Pharisees, but all the  
 virtue of the most sage philosophers<sup>1</sup> ; somewhat  
<sup>20.</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Τί ἂν τις εἴποι τῶν προσταγμάτων τὴν φιλοσοφίαν, τῶν οὐρανίων  
 νόμων τὴν ἀρετὴν, τῆς ἀγγελικῆς πολιτείας τὴν εὐταξίαν ; τοιοῦτον γὰρ  
 ἡμῖν εἰσηγήσατο βίον, τοιοῦτους ἡμῖν ἔθηκε νόμους, τοιαύτην κατεστήσατο  
 πολιτείαν, ὡς τοὺς τοῦτοις χρωμένους ἀγγέλους εὐθέως γίνεσθαι, καὶ



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Luke x.  
27.

in part concurrent therewith philosophy hath described and delivered<sup>s</sup>; (it is no wonder it should, since all of it is so plainly consonant to reason;) yet what philosophy hath in this kind afforded, is in truth, if compared with what our Religion teacheth, exceedingly meagre, languid, and flat<sup>h</sup>; two words here, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself*, do signify more, do contain in them more sense and savour, to the judgment and relish of a well disposed mind, than the Ethics of Aristotle, the Offices of Cicero, the Precepts and Dissertations of Epictetus, the many other volumes of philosophical morality all put together<sup>i</sup>; in matter our rule is far more rich and full, more sweet and sapid than theirs; in force and efficacy it doth also (as we shall hereafter see) far excel them.

IV. We may hereto annex this consideration, which may pass for another peculiar advantage of our Religion, that as it delivereth so excellent and perfect a rule of life, so it delivereth it unto us pure from any alloy embasing, free of any

ὁμοίους Θεῷ κατὰ δύναμιν τὴν ἡμετέραν.—Chrys. in Joh. Hom. xiii. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 602.]

Vid. Lud. Viv. in Aug. de Civ. D. x. 4. [col. 542 c.]

<sup>s</sup> Ὅσα οὖν παρὰ πᾶσι καλῶς εἴρηται, ἡμῶν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐστὶ — Just. M. Apol. ii. [Opp. p. 101 c.]

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Grot. de Verit. iv. 12. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 70.]

<sup>i</sup> Quæ disputationes, quæ literæ quorumlibet philosophorum, quæ leges quarumlibet civitatum, duobus præceptis, ex quibus Christus dicit totam Legem Prophetasque pendere, ullo modo sint comparandæ?—Aug. ad Volus. [Ep. cxxxvii. Opp. Tom. ii. col. 409 D.] Vid. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιθ. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 589.

\*Ὁ γάρ τοι δηλοῦν ἐθέλει τοῦτομα τὸ Χριστιανοῦ, ἄνδρα διὰ τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ γνώσεως καὶ διδασκαλίας, σωφροσύνη καὶ δικαιοσύνη, καρτερίᾳ τε βίου καὶ ἀρετῆς ἀνδρίᾳ, εὐσεβείας τε ὁμολογίᾳ ἐνὸς καὶ μόνου τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεοῦ διαπρέπειν.—Euseb. Hist. Eccl. i. 4. [Tom. i. p. 15.]

clog encumbering it; for that it chiefly, and in a manner only requireth of us a rational and spiritual service, consisting in performance of substantial duties, plainly necessary or profitable; not withdrawing us from the practice of solid piety and virtue by obligations to a tedious observance of many external rites; not spending the vigour of our minds upon superficial formalities, (or *negotious scrupulosities*, as Tertullian termeth them<sup>k</sup>;) such as serve only to amuse childish fancies, or to depress slavish spirits. It supposeth us men, men of good understanding and ingenuous disposition, and dealeth with us as such; and much more such it rendereth us, if we comply therewith. The ritual observances it enjoineth are as few in number, in nature simple and easy to perform, so evidently reasonable, very decent, and very useful; apt to instruct us in, able to excite us unto the practice of most wholesome duties: which consideration sheweth this doctrine to be complete, suitable to the most adult age and best constitution, to the most ripe and improved capacities of man. But further,

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<sup>k</sup> Sacrificiorum quoque onere, et operationum, et oblationum negotiosas scrupulositates nemo reprehendit.—Adv. Marc. ii. [18. Opp. p. 391 B.]

Quædam pauca pro multis eademque factu facillima, et intellectu augustissima, et observatione castissima ipse Dominus, et apostolica tradidit disciplina; sicuti est baptismi sacramentum, et celebratio corporis et sanguinis Domini.—Aug. de Doct. Chr. iii. 9. [Opp. Tom. iii. col. 49 B.]

Dominus noster Jesus Christus leni jugo nos subdidit, et sarcinæ levi; unde sacramentis numero paucissimis, observatione facillimis, significatione præstantissimis, societatem novi populi colligavit; sicuti est baptismus Trinitatis nomine consecratus, communicatio corporis et sanguinis ipsius, et siquid aliud in Scripturis canonicis commendatur.—Aug. ad Januar. [Ep. lrv. Opp. Tom. ii. col. 124 A.]

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V. Our Religion hath also this especial advantage, that it setteth before us a living copy and visible standard of good practice; wherein we have all its precepts compacted as it were into one body, and at once exposed to our view. Example yieldeth the most compendious instruction<sup>1</sup>, together with the most efficacious incitement to action; but never was there or could be any example in either respect comparable to this; never was any so thoroughly perfect in itself, so purposely designed, so fitly accommodated for imitation, or so forcibly engaging thereto, as this: there is not one flaw, one spot, one false or uneven stroke in all this copy, so that we are secure from doing amiss in transcribing any part thereof; it was intended to conduct us through all the parts of duty, especially those which are most high and difficult to our frail and decayed nature, general charity, self-denial, humility, and patience: it was admirably squared for the imitation of all men, the Person in whom it shined being, as it were, indefinite, and unrestrained to any single condition; he being in right and power superior to the greatest princes, though according to choice and in outward parts inferior to the meanest subjects; having under his command the largest wealth, although enjoying none; being able readily to procure to himself what glory and respect he pleased, yet pleasing to pass obscure and disregarded; so teaching those of highest rank to be sober and condescensive, those of lowest degree to be patient and content in their respective states;

<sup>1</sup> Longum iter est per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla.  
— Sen. [Ep. vi. 4.]

teaching all men not to rest in, nor much to regard these present things, but singly in all their doings above all things to seek God's honour, with main resolution and diligence to prosecute his service: and as to all degrees, so to all capacities was his practice suited, being neither austere nor remiss, formal nor singular, careless nor boisterous; but in a moderate, even, and uniform course so tempered, that persons of all callings and all complexions easily might follow him in the practice of all true righteousness, in the performance of all substantial duties toward God and toward man. It is also an example attended with the greatest obligations and inducements to follow it; the great excellency and high dignity of the Person, being the most holy, first-born Son of God, heir of eternal majesty; our manifold relations to him, being our Lord and Master, our best Friend, our most gracious Redeemer; the many inestimable benefits received by us from him, all that redemption from extreme misery, and capacity of perfect happiness do import, are so many potent arguments engaging us to imitate him.

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VI. Further, our Religion doth not only thus truly and fully acquaint us with our duty; but, which is another peculiar virtue thereof, it buildeth our duty upon most solid grounds, presseth it with most valid inducements, draweth it from the best principles, and driveth it to the best ends: no philosophy can in any measure represent virtue so truly estimable and eligible, can assign so evident and cogent reason why we should embrace it and strictly adhere thereto, can so well discover

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or describe the excellent fruits that grow upon it, as doth this philosophy of ours, as the ancient Fathers are wont to call it. Other philosophies have, indeed, highly commended virtue, and vehemently exhorted thereto; but the grounds on which they laid its praise are very sandy, the arguments by which they enforced its practice are very feeble, the principles from which they deduced it, and the ends which they propounded thereto, are very poor and mean, if we discuss them; at least if they be compared with ours: virtue, said they, is a thing of itself, upon account of its own native beauty and worth, abstracting from all reward or profit springing from it, very admirable and desirable; it is beside a very pleasant and very useful thing, begetting tranquillity and satisfaction of mind; yielding health, safety, reputation, pleasure, quiet, and other manifold conveniences of life: but can so magnificent and so massy a fabric of commendation stand firm upon such foundations as these? Are these principles of love and admiration toward we know not what, these ends of temporal advantage and convenience, so noble or worthy? are the accommodations of this short and uncertain life a proper encouragement or a just recompense for the laborious achievements of true virtue? are these weapons sufficient to fortify men, or these discourses able to animate them in resisting the temptations which avert from virtue, or avoiding the enchantments which allure to vice? Will men, I say, readily, for the sake of an imaginary or insensible thing, (a goodly name only, for all they see,) which representeth no more benefit attending it, cross the

bent of their natural inclinations, forfeit their present ease, reject certain fruitions of pleasure, wave occasions of getting to themselves profit, honour, and power, goods so manifestly substantial and grateful to nature? will they undergo contentedly the difficulties, encounter the dangers, sustain the pains, the disgraces, the losses commonly incident to virtue? No surely, when it cometh to earnest trial, it will hardly seem reason or wisdom so to do. But the Christian doctrine, as it compriseth, and in an inferior order urgeth also such grounds and arguments, so it doth exhibit others far more solid and forcible: it commendeth goodness to us, not only as agreeable to man's imperfect and fallible reason, but as conformable to the perfect goodness of God, as the dictate of his infallible wisdom, as the resolution of his most holy will; as enjoined by his unquestionable authority, as our indispensable duty, and only way to happiness: the principles, from which it willeth us to act, are love, reverence, and gratitude to God, hearty good-will toward men, and a sober regard to our own true welfare; the ends which it prescribeth are God's honour, public edification, and the salvation of our own souls: it stirreth us to good practice, by minding us, that we shall thereby resemble the Supreme Goodness, shall express our gratitude toward that great Benefactor, unto whom we owe all that we have; shall discharge our duty, pay due honour, perform faithful service to our Almighty Lord and King; that we shall thereby surely decline the wrath and displeasure of God, shall surely obtain his favour and mercy, with all sorts of blessings

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needful or profitable for us; that we shall not only avoid regrets and terrors of conscience here, but escape endless miseries and torments; we shall not only procure present comfort and peace of mind, but shall acquire crowns of everlasting glory and bliss. These surely are the truest and firmest grounds upon which a right estimation of virtue can subsist; these are motives incomparably most effectual to the embracing thereof; these are the purest fountains whence it can spring, the noblest marks whither it can aim; a virtue so grounded, so reared, is certainly most sound and genuine, most firm and stable, most infinitely beneficial. But further,

VII. It is a peculiar advantage of Christianity, (which no other law or doctrine so much as pretendeth to,) that it not only clearly teacheth us and strongly persuadeth us to so excellent a way of life, but provideth also sufficient help and ability to practise it; without which (such is the frailty of our nature, as experience proveth, that) all instruction, all exhortation, all encouragement, would avail little. Other laws, for want of this, are in effect

2 Cor. iii.  
7, 9.

Rom. v. 20.

ministries of condemnation, racks of conscience, parents of guilt and of regret; reading hard lessons, but not assisting to do after them; imposing heavy burdens, but not enabling to bear them: our law is not such; it is not a dead letter, but hath a quickening spirit accompanying it<sup>m</sup>; it not only soundeth through the ear, but stampeth itself upon the heart of him that sincerely doth embrace it<sup>n</sup>; it always

2 Cor. iii.  
6.

<sup>m</sup> Vid. Aug. de Spir. et Lit.

<sup>n</sup> Τοῖς ἐν βίῳ ἐπανηρημένοις ἰσχύει πρὸς τὴν λοιπὴν σωτηρίαν ἐμπνεῖ.—Clem. Alex. Strom. [vii. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 860.]

carrieth with it a sure guide to all good, and a safe guard from all evil: if our mind be doubtful or dark, it directeth us to a faithful oracle, where we may receive counsel and information: if our passions are unruly, if our appetites are outrageous, if temptations be violent, and threaten to overbear us, it leadeth us to a full magazine, whence we may furnish ourselves with all manner of arms to withstand and subdue them: if our condition, in respect to all other means, be disconsolate or desperate, it sendeth us to a place, where we shall not fail of refreshment and relief; it offereth, upon our earnest seeking and asking, the wisdom and strength of God himself for our direction, our aid, our support and comfort, in all exigencies. To them, who with due fervency and constancy ask it, God hath in the Gospel promised to grant his Holy Spirit, to guide them in their ways, to admonish them of their duty, to strengthen them in obedience, to guard them from surprises and assaults of temptation, to sustain them, and cheer them in afflictions. This advantage, as it is proper to our Religion, so it is exceedingly considerable; for what would the most perfect rule or way signify, without as well a power to observe it, as a light to discern it? and how can man, (so ignorant, so impotent, so inconstant a creature; so easily deluded by false appearances, and transported with disorderly passions; so easily shaken and unsettled by any small assault,) either alone without some guidance perceive, or by himself without some assistance prosecute, what is good for him, especially in cases of intricacy and difficulty? how should he who hath frequent experience of his own weakness,

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XVI.Luke xi.  
13.



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not be utterly disheartened and cast into despair either of standing fast in a good state, or of recovering himself from a bad one; of rescuing himself from any vicious inclination, or attaining any virtuous habit, if he did not apprehend such a friendly power vigilantly guarding him, ready upon all occasions to succour and abet him? This consideration it is, which only can nourish our hope, can excite our courage, can quicken and support our endeavour in religious practice, by assuring us, that there is no duty so hard, which by the grace vouchsafed us we may not achieve; that there is no enemy so mighty, which by the help afforded us we cannot master; so that, although we find ourselves able to do nothing of ourselves, yet we can do all things by Christ that strengtheneth us.

Phil. iv.  
13.

2 Chron.  
vi. 36.  
Eccles. vii.  
20.

VIII. Another peculiar excellency of our Religion is this, that it alone can appease and satisfy a man's conscience, breeding therein a well-grounded hope, and a solid comfort; healing the wounds of bitter remorse and anxious fear, which the sense of guilt doth inflict: *There is no man*, as king Solomon said, and all men know, *who sinneth not*; who doth not find himself in thought, word, and deed, frequently thwarting the dictates of reason, violating the laws of piety and justice, transgressing the bounds of sobriety; who consequently doth not in his own judgment condemn himself of disorder, and of offence committed against the world's great Lawgiver and Governor, the just patron of right and goodness; who thence doth not deem himself obnoxious to God's wrath, and is not fearful of deserved punishment from him: which fear must

needs be fostered and augmented by considering, that as past facts are irrevocable, so guilt is indelible<sup>o</sup>, and punishment, except by the voluntary remission of him that is offended, inevitable; as also that there are no visible means of removing or abating such guilt by any reparation or amends that he can make, who is more apt to accumulate new offences, than able to compensate for what he hath committed: now in such a case, some man, <sup>Wisd. xii.</sup> indeed, may frame to himself hopes of mercy; may <sup>19.</sup> from the experience of God's forbearance to punish, and continuance of his bounty to sinners, presume that God is placable, and will not be rigorous in his proceedings with him; may hopefully guess, that in favour God will admit his endeavours at repentance, will accept the compensations he offereth in lieu of his duty, may suffer his guilt to be atoned by the sacrifices he presenteth; yet can no man upon such presumptions ground a full confidence that he shall find mercy; he cannot however be satisfied upon what terms mercy will be granted, in what manner it shall be dispensed, or how far it shall extend; God never having exhibited any express declarations or promises to those purposes; no man therefore can otherwise than suspect himself to be in a bad state, or esteem himself secure from the pursuits of justice and wrath; as he knoweth that *Sin* <sup>Gen. iv. 7.</sup> *lieth at the door*, so he cannot know but that vengeance may lie near it; hence common reason, as well as the Jewish law, is a ministry of death, <sup>2 Cor. iii.</sup> and a killing letter, carrying nothing in the looks <sup>6, 7.</sup>

<sup>o</sup> *Pena potest demi, culpa perennis erit.*—Ovid. [Epist. i. 1. 64.]

SERM. or language thereof, but death and ruin; hence  
 XVI. is a man (if at least he be not besotted into a  
 Rom. viii. careless stupidity) shut up in an irksome bondage  
 15. of spirit, under the grievous tyranny, if not of  
 utter despair, yet of restless suspicion about his  
 condition; which as it quencheth in his mind all  
 steady peace and joy, so it dampeth his courage  
 and alacrity, it enervateth his care and industry  
 to do well, he doubting what success and what  
 acceptance his undertakings may find; it also  
 cooleth in him good affections towards God, whom  
 that he hath offended he knoweth, and questioneth  
 whether he can be able to reconcile.

From this unhappy plight our Religion thoroughly doth rescue us, assuring us, that God Almighty is not only reconcileable, but desirous, upon good terms, to become our friend, himself most frankly proposing overtures of grace, and soliciting us to close with them; it upon our compliance tendereth, under God's own hand and seal, a full discharge of all guilts and debts, however contracted; it receiveth a man into perfect favour and friendship, if he doth not himself wilfully reject them, or resolve to continue at distance, in estrangement and enmity toward God. It proclaimeth, that if we be careful to amend,  
 Ps. cxxx. God will not be extreme to mark what we do  
 3. 4. amiss; that iniquity, if we do not incorrigibly affect and cherish it, shall not be our ruin; that  
 Ezek. xviii. 30. although by our infirmity we fall often, yet by our repentance we may rise again, and by our sincerity shall stand upright; that our endeavours to serve and please God (although imperfect and defective, if serious and sincere) will be accepted

by him: this is the tenor of that great covenant between heaven and earth, which the Son of God did procure by his intercession, did purchase by his merits of wonderful obedience and patience, did ratify and seal by his blood; did publish to mankind, did confirm by miraculous works, did solemnize by holy institutions, doth by the evangelical ministry continually recommend to all men; so that we can nowise doubt of its full accomplishment on God's part, if we be not deficient on ours: so to our inestimable benefit and unspeakable comfort doth our Religion ease their conscience, and encourage them in the practice of their duty, who do sincerely embrace it, and firmly adhere thereto.

IX. The last advantage which I shall mention 1 Cor. i. of this doctrine is this: that it propoundeth and asserteth itself in a manner very convincing and satisfactory: it propoundeth itself in a style and garb of speech, as accommodate to the general capacity of its hearers, so proper to the authority which it claimeth, becoming the majesty and sincerity of Divine truth<sup>p</sup>; it expresseth itself plainly and simply, without any affectation or artifice, without ostentation of wit or eloquence, such as men study to insinuate and impress their devices by: it also speaketh with an imperious and awful confidence, such as argueth the speaker satisfied both of his own wisdom and authority<sup>q</sup>; that he doubteth not of what he saith himself, that he knoweth his

<sup>p</sup> Ἀπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἔφν.—Eurip. [Phoen. 469.]

Vid. Orig. in Cels. Lib. vi. [p. 274.]

<sup>q</sup> Οὐ γὰρ κτύπον ῥημάτων, οὐδὲ λέξεως κόμπον, οὐδὲ ὀνομάτων καὶ ῥημάτων κόσμον καὶ συνθήκην ὀψόμεθα περιττὴν καὶ ἀνόητον (πρόβρον γὰρ ταῦτα φιλοσοφίας ἀπάσης) ἀλλὰ ἰσχυρὸν ἄμαχον καὶ βίαν, καὶ δογματῶν

SERM.  
XVI.Eccles. viii.  
4.

hearers obliged to believe him ; its words are not like the words of a wise man, who is wary and careful that he slip not into mistake, (interposing therefore now and then his may-bes and perchances,) nor like the words of a learned Scribe, grounded on semblances of reason, and backed with testimonies ; nor as the words of a crafty sophister, who by long circuits, subtle fetches, and sly trains of discourse doth inveigle men to his opinion ; but like the words of a king, carrying with them authority and power uncontrollable, commanding forthwith attention, assent, and obedience ; this you are to believe, this you are to do, upon pain of our high displeasure, at your utmost peril be it ; your life, your salvation dependeth thereon : such is the style and tenor thereof, plainly such as becometh the sovereign Lord of all to use, when he shall please to proclaim his mind and will unto us<sup>r</sup>. It freeth us from laborious and anxious inquiries, from endless disputes and janglings, from urging ineffectual arguments, and answering cross difficulties, &c. It doth also assert itself and approve its truth to the reason of man the most advantageously that can be ; with proofs most suitable to itself, and in themselves most effectual ; waving those inferior methods of subtle argumen-

ὁρθῶν ἀμήχανον δύναμιν, καὶ μυρίων χορηγίαν ἀγαθῶν.—Chrys. in Joh. Hom. ii. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 561.]

<sup>r</sup> Quæ quidem tradita sunt breviter, ac nude. Nec enim decebat aliter, ut cum Deus ad hominem loqueretur, argumentis assereret suas voces, tanquam fides ei non haberetur ; sed, ut oportuit, est locutus, quasi rerum omnium maximus iudex, cujus est non argumentari, sed pronunciare.—Lact. Instit. iii. 1.

Legant nostra—quam excellenter quam divine, non tanquam ex philosophorum concertationibus strepere, sed tanquam ex oraculis et Dei, nubibus intonare.—Aug. de Civ. Dei, ii. 19. [Opp. Tom. vii. col. 46 F.]

tation and plausible language with which men are wont to confirm or set off their conceits ; which how weak they are, how unfit to maintain truth, their unsuccessfulness doth evince ; seeing by those means scarce any man hath been able thoroughly either to settle himself in, or to draw others to a full persuasion concerning any important truth, discosted from sense : such methods therefore the Christian doctrine hath waved, (or rather slighted, as beneath itself,) applying arguments to the demonstration of its truth, far more potent, more sublime, and, indeed, truly divine ; beside its intrinsic worth, or the excellency shining in itself, (which speaketh it worthy of God, and goeth more than half way in proving it to proceed from him,) there is no kind of attestation needful or proper, which God hath not afforded thereto ; God is in himself invisible and undiscernible to any sense of ours, neither could we endure the lustre and glory of his immediate presence ; it must be therefore by effects of his incommunicable power, by works extraordinary and supernatural, (such as no creature can perform or counterfeit,) that he must, if ever, convincingly signify his purpose or pleasure to us ; and such innumerable hath God vouchsafed to yield in favour and countenance of our Religion ; by clearly predicting and presignifying the future revelation of this doctrine by express voices and manifest apparitions from heaven, by suspending and thwarting the course of natural causes in many ways and instances, by miracles of providence no less remarkable than those of nature, by internal attestations to the minds and consciences of men ;

SERM. things too great slightly to be passed over, and the  
 XVI. particular mention of which I must therefore now omit ; by such wonderful means, I say, hath God taken care to convince us, that our Religion came from him, which is a peculiar advantage that it hath, such as no other institution (except that of the Jews, which was a prelude thereto, and whose truth serveth to confirm it) can reasonably pretend unto ; and a great perfection it is thereof, since as it is no small content to a traveller, by a direction which he can fully confide in, to know that he is in the right way to his journey's end ; so it cannot but prove an exceeding satisfaction and encouragement to us to be assured, by infallible testimony of God himself, that our Religion is the true and direct way unto eternal happiness.

These considerations may, I conceive, be sufficient, as to vindicate our Religion from all aspersions cast upon it either by inconsiderate and injudicious, or by vain and dissolute persons ; so to confirm us all in the esteem, and incite us to the practice thereof ; which use of them God in his mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord ; to whom for ever be all praise. *Amen.*

1 Pet. v.  
10, 11.

Now *The God of grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

2 Thess. ii.  
16, 17.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

And in Jesus Christ.

## SERMON XVII.

THAT JESUS IS THE TRUE MESSIAS.

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ACTS IX. 22.

*But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ.*

AS for the name of *Messias*, there is evident SERM.  
XVII.  
reason why it should not be openly expressed in the ancient predictions ; it being an easy thing for any persons, out of imposture or wantonness, to have assumed that name ; and consequently it would not have suited so well the true person. It was therefore more expedient, that his name should rather only be covertly signified or intimated ; it was sufficient that a name should be imposed on him well agreeing to his office and chief performances\*. There be indeed several names attributed to the *Messias* ; *They shall call his name Emmanuel*, said *Isaiah* ; *This is his name, whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness, (Jehovah tsidkenu ;)* and, *His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*, said *Isaiah* again ; but it is apparent, that these were

\* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. i. 3. [Tom. i. p. 11.]



**SERM.** not intended to be so much his proper names,  
**XVII.** as attributes or epithets congruous unto him in regard to the eminency of his person and performances.

The Prophet Zechariah seemeth also (insisting in the footsteps of Isaiah and Jeremiah) to assign him the name *Netser*, (or the Branch;) *Behold the man whose name is The Branch*: but this only denoted an appellation suiting him, as derived from the stock of David, and might beside mystically allude to some circumstance concerning him. It doth not therefore appear, that the one proper name, by which the Messias, as the Son of man, should be known and called, is directly fore-mentioned; yet it is reasonable to suppose, that God would have an especial care, that he should have one befitting him. It was one of the seven things which the Talmudists say were constituted before the world: the law, repentance, paradise, hell, the throne of glory, the sanctuary, the name of the Messias; according to that in the seventy-second Psalm, ver. 17, *Ante solem primum nomen ejus*; so it seems they read it: the LXX. have it, *πρὸ τοῦ ἡλίου διαμενεῖ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ*.

It was anciently a method of Divine Providence to impose upon persons (destinated by God to be especial subjects of his favour and eminent ministers of his glory) names answerable to the nature of their employment, or to the design which was, by their means and ministry, to be accomplished. Whereby as God's care and providence over human affairs was declared, so men upon the mention of such names were admonished to consider the Divine benefits, and the duties corre-

Zech. vi.  
 12;  
 iii. 8.  
 Isai. iv. 2;  
 xi. 1.  
 Jer. xxiii.  
 5;  
 xxxiii. 15.

spondent to them. The particular reason of impos- SERM.  
XVII.  
 ing such names is sometime expressly set down; as Gen. iv.  
25;  
 in the cases of Seth, Abraham, Israel, Solomon; xvii. 5;  
xxxii. 28.  
 sometime it seems tacitly implied, the actions of 1 Chr. xxiii.  
9.  
 the persons interpreting the reason of their names, Gen. xiv.  
18.  
 as in Melchizedek, Joshua, Malachi, and perhaps Heb. vii. 1.  
 in many others.

This method with great reason we may suppose that the same Divine wisdom would use in assigning a name to that person, whom from the beginning of things he had promised, and before the foundation of the world had designed to sanctify and send into the world, for achieving the most high and excellent design that ever, for the glory of God and the good of his creation, was to be undertaken in this world. Most fit it would be, that God himself should be his god-father; that he should have no ordinary, no casual, no insignificant name; but such an one, which being heard might instruct and admonish us, might raise in us a sense of God's infinite mercy and bounty toward us; might breed love in our hearts, and impress veneration on our minds toward him, who should bear that auspicious and comfortable name; that name, which as the spouse of the mystical Solomon in John x. 36.  
 her mystical song did sing, is as an ointment Cant. i. 3.  
 poured forth, full of most wholesome and most pleasant fragrancy.

Now since of all the Messias's performances Isai. xxv.  
9;  
 none was to be more signal than that of saving; to xxxv. 4;  
 publish, to purchase, to effect salvation, were to be xlix. 8, 26;  
lxiii. 1;  
 (according to what the Prophets expressly and lv. 5;  
lii. 7, 10;  
 frequently say) his peculiar works; to be the lxi. 10;  
lix. 16.  
 Saviour of the world was (as we before touched, Rom. i. 7.

SERM. according to the common opinion of the Jews)  
 XVII. a proper attribute of his: wherefore the name  
 Zech. ix. 9. Jesus (which we are told in the Gospel was by  
 John iv. 42. direction from God imparted by particular reve-  
 Matt. i. 21. lation, brought by an Archangel from heaven,  
 Luke i. 32; ii. 21. imposed on our Lord) did very well suit the  
 Messiah. No other name could be more sweet or  
 acceptable; no other name could better become  
 him, who was to redeem men from all their ene-  
 mies, their slaveries, their errors, their sins, their  
 miseries.

It was, indeed, a name not in its immediate  
 application altogether new, for many others had  
 borne it: Jesus, the son of Justus, we have men-  
 tioned in St Paul; Jesus the son of Sirach, that  
 excellent writer, we know; and divers others so  
 named occur in Josephus: yet was it questionless  
 by God's providence, or by Moses by Divine in-  
 stinct, first produced with relation to the Messiah<sup>b</sup>:  
 Num. xiii. 16. *Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua*,  
 saith the text: being in a mysterious exchange  
 from a former name assigned to the famous Jesus  
 (as not only Bensirach but the Apostle to the  
 Ecclus. xlv. 1. Hebrews write him) the son of Nun, who of all  
 Heb. iv. 8. the ancient types did most exactly (in office and  
 performance) represent and presignify the Messiah;  
 being, as Bensirach speaks, *Great for the saving of*  
*God's elect*; whose actions are wonderfully congru-  
 ous to those which we attribute to our Jesus. For,  
 by the way, to shew the resemblance, (omitting less,  
 and more nice congruities,) as Joshua did bring  
 Num. xiv. 6, 7. the good report, and evangelized concerning the  
 promised land, (when other false or faint inquirers

<sup>b</sup> Basil. Iren. &c.

defamed it, and discouraged the people from entering ;) as he was educated under Moses, and served him faithfully ; as he succeeded in the administration and government of God's people, perfecting what Moses had begun of deliverance and settlement to them ; as he brought the Israelites (not that old disbelieving, mutinous, and repining generation, but a new progeny of better disposed people) finally out of the wilderness into Canaan, by God's miraculous assistance, subduing their enemies, and establishing them in a quiet possession of the promised land, allotting unto each tribe its inheritance ; and as he did re-circumcise the children of Israel : so did our heavenly Jesus first make a true and faithful discovery concerning the mystical land of promise (that better country) flowing with spiritual milk and honey, (abundant with all spiritual comforts and pleasures, for the good, sustenance, and refreshment of our souls). He was born under the Law, and submitted to its injunctions, fulfilling all righteousness. He survived it, (the part of it which was purely Mosaical and arbitrary,) and did complete it. He doth conduct God's regenerate people° (such as believe, and willingly follow him) out of the desert state of error, guilt, and sin, into the superior state of happy rest and joy, with miraculous power and efficacy ; vanquishing all the spiritual Amorites, (the devil, world, and flesh) which infest, obstruct, and oppose them ; settling them in a perpetual, undisturbed, and immovable enjoyment of that

Josh. v. 2.

Heb. xi.  
16.

Gal. iv. 4.  
Matt. iii.  
15;  
v. 17.

° Ὁ ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς.—Acts iii. 15.

Ἀρχηγὸς καὶ Σωτὴρ.—Acts v. 31.

Ὁ τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγός.—Heb. xii. 2.

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blissful region ; having also by a spiritual circumcision prepared and consecrated them to God. Our Saviour therefore, not only when he at last in fulness of truth did come into the world, but anciently in type and shadow, may be supposed to have received this name Jesus, conferred upon him in the person of Joshua, his most illustrious representative. It certainly was most apposite to the Messias.

That Jesus (that person, whose birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension hence, are related in the evangelical Histories) is the Christ, is the principal article of pure faith ; the most peculiar doctrine of our Religion as such, and as distinct from all other Religions : it, indeed, virtually comprehends all other doctrines of moment therein, regarding either faith or practice : for that our being persuaded, that Jesus is the Christ, implies, that we apprehend ourselves obliged to embrace for truth whatever was taught by him and his Apostles, to obey all his laws, to rely upon him for attainment of all the mercies, and blessings, and rewards, which he promised to dispense, in that order and upon those terms, which the Gospel declareth. Whence to the hearty belief of this point such great commendations are given, so high rewards are offered, so excellent privileges are annexed in the Scriptures. Whence also the declaring, proving, and persuading this doctrine was the chief matter of the Apostles' preaching, as both their profession and practice do shew. *The Jews, saith St Paul to the Corinthians, require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom ; but we preach Christ, that was crucified : and, I determined, saith*

1 Cor. i.  
22, 23.

he again of himself, *not to know anything among you*, (that is, not to discover any other knowledge, not to insist on any other subject,) *save Jesus Christ, even him that was crucified, καὶ τοῦτον ἑσταρωμένον*. This, St John tells us, was the drift of his writing the Gospel (which is a more extensive and durable way of preaching): *These things, saith he, were written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ*. And their practice, suitable to such professions, is apparent in divers passages of this book, wherein their acts and their discourses are reported. This text particularly represents the scope to which St Paul mainly directed his preaching, which was the maintenance and persuasion of this point, that Jesus is the Christ.

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I Cor. ii. 2.

John xx.

31.

It is therefore very requisite, that we should well understand the meaning thereof, and that we should firmly be persuaded of its truth. To which purpose I shall endeavour, by God's assistance, to imitate St Paul's practice here, who did *συνβιβάζειν*, (that is the Greek word here, signifying primarily to put or bring things together, and thence in a way of collection or argumentation to teach,) who, I say, did instruct his auditors, collecting it from testimonies of ancient Scripture, and confirming it by arguments grounded thereon. In performing which I shall observe this method:

Acts ix.  
22.

I. I shall explain the notion and reason of this name, or title, Christ.

II. I shall shew (that which is here tacitly supposed) that there was by God's appointment to be, or to come into the world from God, one person, signally that which this name or title imports, ὁ Χριστός, *the very Christ*.

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III. I shall argue that Jesus was that person.

IV. I shall explain in what manner, in what respects, to what purposes, Jesus, in the New Testament, is represented as Christ.

V. I shall make some practical application of the point.

John i. 20;  
iv. 25.

I. For the first particular. Christ is a name, or title, importing office and dignity; being the same with Messias, that in Greek, this in Hebrew, signifying, the Anointed; the which appellation we find attributed to several persons upon the following ground. Of ancient times, in the eastern countries, (abounding as with good oil, so with many delicate odoriferous spices,) it seems generally to have been the manner, (as from Hazael the Syrian his inunction may probably be collected,) it was, however, such among the Jews, to separate or consecrate persons, and things also I might add, designed to any great or extraordinary employment, by anointing them with ointments composed of those ingredients; they symbolizing, or denoting thereby, as it seems, both a plentiful effusion upon them of gifts and faculties qualifying them for such services; and also a comfortable and pleasant diffusion of good and grateful effects expected from them; (from the use of things, the

1 Kings  
xix. 15.

performances of persons thus sanctified). *Thy name*, saith the spouse in the Canticles, *is an ointment poured forth*; that is, thy name is very delightful, very acceptable; and, *Behold*, saith David, commending brotherly love and concord, *how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity; it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard,*

Cant. i. 3.

Ps. cxxxiii.  
1, 2.

even Aaron's beard: so good and pleasant were those employments hoped to be, to which men were by such unction inaugurated. We find especially three sorts of persons, to whom this consecration did, by Divine appointment, belong; kings, priests, and prophets; persons by whose ministry God of old did manage his intercourse with men, in governing them and communicating his blessings to them, both in an ordinary way (so he used kings and priests) and in an extraordinary manner, therein he employed prophets; which sorts of persons are therefore styled God's anointed; kings and priests more frequently, but sometimes also prophets; as in that of the Psalm; *Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm;* Ps. cv. 15.  
1 Chron. xvi. 22. where prophets and the anointed of God do seem to denote the same thing, and one to expound the other: however they belong to the same persons; for Abraham, whom together with the other patriarchs those words concern, is expressly called a prophet: *Now therefore, saith the text, restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.* Gen. xx. 7. And that Isaac was a prophet, the Apostle to the Hebrews intimates, saying; *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.* Heb. xi. 20. The same is plain of Jacob, who before his death uttered many great and remarkable predictions. Gen. xlix: The Patriarchs therefore probably as prophets were styled God's anointed. But to remark somewhat of these great offices, and their anointing, singly:

For priests, although at first all the sons of Aaron were thus consecrated according to that law in Exodus, *Thou shalt anoint Aaron, and his sons,*



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Exod. xxx.  
30;  
xl. 15.  
Levit. iv.  
3, 5, 16;  
vi. 22.

that they may minister unto me in the priest's office<sup>d</sup>; yet the Jewish masters tell us, that afterward in all the course of times only the high priest was so consecrated. Whence by the anointed, or the priest that is anointed, is, say they, meant the high priest, in distinction from other inferior priests.

For kings, the Jewish doctors also (as Master Selden<sup>e</sup> reports) do tell us, that such of them, who in a legal, orderly, and unquestioned course of right did succeed into the kingdom, were not themselves in person anointed, (they being conceived to derive a sufficient consecration from their ancestors;) but all those, who in an extraordinary way by special designation, (as Saul, David, Jehu, Hazael,) or upon a doubtful and controverted, or opposed title, (as Solomon and Joas,) did assume the royal charge, were thus initiated: (how ancient also the custom of anointing princes was, may be seen from that expression in Jotham's parable; *The trees went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, Reign thou over us*).

2 Kings ix.  
3;  
xi. 12.  
  
1 Kings  
xix. 15;  
i. 39.  
  
Judges ix.  
8.

As for prophets, we do not find that they were commonly, or according to ordinary rule anointed; but one plain instance we have of Elisha, substituted to Elijah, (the chief of prophets in his time,) in this manner: *Elisha*, it is said by God, *the son of Shaphat, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room*; who was thus consecrated, probably, because he was to be a prophet more than ordinary,

1 Kings  
xix. 16.

<sup>d</sup> Χριστοὶ ἱερεῖς.—2 Mac. i. 10.

<sup>e</sup> De Succ. ii. 9.

Ὁὗς καὶ αὐτοὺς πνεύματι θείῳ προφήται χρίοντες, εἰκονικοὺς τινὰς Χριστοὺς ἀπειργάζοντο.—Euseb. Hist. Eccl. i. 3. [Tom. i. p. 12.]

endued with higher gifts, and designed to greater actions, than common prophets were then; or perhaps because he was to be the Archprophet, or head of the prophets at that time. SERM.  
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We may also further observe, that some persons, who (in probability) did not partake any material unction, but were yet destinated by God, and qualified and employed as special instruments of his providence or grace, for producing effects suitable to any of those offices, have been therefore styled God's anointed. Upon which score the Patriarchs (by whom God's true Religion was maintained and conveyed) do seem to have been called God's anointed. And king Cyrus (whose ministry God used in the re-edifying his temple and refreshing his people) is therefore termed God's Christ, or anointed; (*Thus saith the Lord* 1 Chron. xvi. 22. *to his anointed, to Cyrus my Christ*; τῷ Χριστῷ μου Κύρω) the name of the sign being imparted to persons who were endued with the qualities, or did perform the effects signified thereby. Isai. xlv. 28;

These things being considered, it appeareth that the name Christ doth import a person in a special and signal manner designed and ordained by God to one, or some, or all of these charges and functions; an extraordinary king, or a great priest, or an eminent prophet; or one, in whom either more or all of these did concur. So much may suffice for the notion and reason of this title, Christ. xlv. 1.

II. Now that there was a Person super-eminently endued with all these characters, (a Christ in all these respects,) decreed by God in due time to come into the world for accomplishment of the greatest purposes answerable to that title, (for the

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instruction and reformation of the world, for the erecting and managing an universal and perpetual kingdom, for the reconciliation and benediction of mankind, for the reduction of all nations to the acknowledgment of God, and obedience to his will, and hope in his mercy,) many express passages in the ancient Scripture declare.

That such a Prophet should be sent, Moses in express terms foretold: *The Lord thy God, saith* Deut. xviii. 15, 18. *he, shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the* John i. 45. *midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto* Acts iii. 22; vii. 37. *him shall ye hearken: and, I will, saith God himself, raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words into his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him, &c.;* which words plainly describe a very extraordinary Prophet some time to come, who was (signally and especially, beyond all other prophets) to resemble Moses; who consequently was to accomplish high designs, and to achieve wonderful acts; to conduct and deliver God's people, to reveal God's mind and will, to promulge a new law, and establish a new covenant; so his resembling Moses doth imply, so his mission doth signify; (for why, if he were not intended for the performance of somewhat great and new, even beyond what Moses did, should he be designed so formally; what need or reason had there been of his mission after Moses?) and so the later prophets do interpret the great Lawgiver's words: who largely predict concerning one, ordained by God to come, who should eminently discharge all parts of the prophetic function; who should disclose new truths to men, should proclaim a new law to

the world, should establish a new covenant with SERM. XVII.  
the house of Israel, and with all people; who Jer. xxxi. 31, 33.  
should propagate the knowledge and worship of Isai. xlix. 8;  
God, enlightening the Gentiles, and converting  
them unto God; who should instruct the ignorant,  
strengthen the faint, comfort the afflicted; accord-  
ing to divers passages concerning him; as, for  
instance, that in Isaiah, cited by St Luke: *The Isai. i. Luke iv. 18.*  
*Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord*  
*hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the*  
*meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted*  
—and that in the same Prophet alleged by St  
Matthew; *Behold my servant, whom I uphold;*  
*mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put Isai. xlii. 1, 2.*  
*my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment Matt. xii. 18, 19.*  
*unto the Gentiles: he shall not cry, &c.; which*  
being anointed to preach tidings and to bring forth  
judgment from God, being elected and inspired by  
God in order to such performances, are peculiar  
marks of a prophet; such promulgation of God's  
will, such ministration of direction and comfort  
from God, are the proper employment of a prophet;  
that is, of an especial agent sent and qualified by  
God to transact spiritual affairs with men, and to  
declare or denounce his pleasure to them.

The ancient Scriptures do also plainly signify  
concerning the same Person, that he should be a  
great Prince constituted by God to govern his Acts ii. 36.  
people for ever in righteousness, peace, and pros-  
perity; endued with power requisite for delivering Luke i. 71, 74, 75.  
them from oppression and slavery; for subduing  
their enemies, for reducing the nations under sub-  
jection unto God: so Isaiah: *For unto us a child Isai. ix. 6, 7.*  
*is born, unto us a son is given; and the government*

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*shall be upon his shoulders—Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice for ever: Jeremiah: Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth: in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: Ezekiel: I will save my flock, they shall be no more a prey—and I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—they shall also walk in my statutes, and observe my statutes, and do them: Daniel: I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days—And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages shall serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed: Hosea: The children of Israel shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days: The Psalmist: I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion; ask of me, and I will give thee the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. In these and in many other places do the Prophets speak (very perspicuously and magnificently) concerning the kingdom, royal state, and princely achievements of this great personage who should come.*

Isai. xi. 1,  
10;  
xvi. 5.

Jer. xxiii.  
5;  
xxxiii. 15;  
xxx. 8.

Ezek.  
xxxiv. 22,  
&c.;  
xxxvi. 21,  
&c.;  
xxxvii. 21,  
&c.

Dan. vii.  
13, 14;  
ii. 44, 45.

Hos. iii. 5.

Ps. ii. 6, 8;  
lxxii. 11,  
17;  
xlv. 6;  
lxxxix. 3,  
27, 36;  
cxxxii. 17,  
18.

That he should also assume and execute the priestly function may also be learned from prophetic instruction. For of him Zechariah thus

spake: *Behold the man whose name is The Branch*<sup>t</sup>; SERM. XVII.  
 (a name, which so often (in sense) is attributed  
 to this Person, as sprouting from the stock of Zech. vi. 12, 13.  
 David;) *he shall grow up out of his place, and  
 he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he  
 shall bear the glory, and shall sit, and rule upon  
 his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his  
 throne; and the counsel of the Lord shall be between  
 them both.* Of him also David spake: *The Lord* Ps. cx. 4.  
*hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest  
 for ever after the order of Melchizedek. To make* Dan. ix. 24.  
*reconciliation for iniquity, (which Daniel ascribes*  
 to him;) *To bear the sins of the people, and To* Isai. liii. 12.  
*make intercession for the transgressors, (which are  
 assigned to him by Isaiah;) are also performances,  
 from which his sacerdotal office may be collected.*

These things being considered, it is no wonder Ps. xlv. 7. Isai. lxi. 1.  
 that the ancient Jews (although the text of Scrip-  
 ture doth seldom, perhaps not oftener than once,  
 in the ninth of Daniel, explicitly and directly  
 apply this name of Christ, or Messias, to this  
 illustrious Person, so prophesied of and promised  
 to come) did especially assign this title unto him;  
 it seeming of any most congruous and most com-  
 prehensive of what appertained to him; most apt  
 to denote all the prerogatives, the endowments,  
 the achievements, the effects, which should belong  
 to him, or proceed from him. Whence it is ob-  
 served by the learned, that the Chaldee Paraphrase  
 (composed, as they say, before Jesus our Lord's  
 time, by the priests, as an interpretation of the  
 not so exactly understood Hebrew Scripture, for  
 edification and instruction of the people) doth

<sup>t</sup> Ἰδοὺ ἀνθρ, Ἀνατολή δνομα αὐτῷ.—LXX. ΠΠΞ

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- very often apply unto him this name of the Messias: according to whose exposition and style, together with tradition continually deduced down from the Prophets themselves, (as is probable,) we see plainly from the New Testament, and from other History conspiring therewith, that God's people unanimously did expect a Person under this name and notion, who should be endued with qualities and should perform actions conformable to the characters mentioned, to come in determinate time into the world. Of Anna
- Luke ii. 38; the prophetess it is said, that *She gave thanks likewise to the Lord, and spake of him, πᾶσι τοῖς προσδεχομένοις λύτρωσιν, to all that expected redemption in Jerusalem.* Hence when St John the Baptist
- iii. 15. did live, and teach in a manner extraordinary, *The people did expect, and all men mused in their hearts concerning him, whether he were the Christ.* Yea,
- John i. 19; *The Jews* (that is, their senate, or great sanhedrim) *sent priests and Levites to inquire of him, whether he were the Christ or no:* and when Jesus's admirable discourses and works had convinced divers
- vii. 31; persons, they said, *When Christ comes, shall he do greater miracles than this man hath done?* and the report which Philip made to Nathanael concerning
- i. 45; Jesus was this; *We have found him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write:* so
- iv. 42; at large they did presume concerning a Christ to come. That they particularly did conceive he should be a great Prophet, who should abundantly declare God's truth and will, may be gathered from divers passages; as from that in St
- vi. 14. John: *Men therefore seeing the miracle that Jesus had done, said, That this is in truth the Prophet,*

who was to come into the world. Thus may that in St Luke be taken; *And there came a fear upon all; and they glorified God, saying, That the great Prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people:* and this the Samaritan woman implied, when she said, *I know that the Messias cometh; and when he shall come, he will tell us all things.* That they supposed he should be a King, who should be furnished with mighty power, and should perform wonderful acts; who should assume the government of God's people with royal majesty, and execute it with glorious success, is most clear. It was no wonder to king Herod to hear the wise men's inquiry, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews?* Upon it he immediately demands of the Scribes, where Christ is to be born. Hence no sooner did Nathanael believe in Christ, but he cries out, *Master, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.* It was upon this supposition that the priests grounded their calumny; *We have found this man perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ, the King;* as also hence (upon information and by instinct from them) Pilate asked him that question, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* hence likewise proceeded that acclamation; *Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος βασιλεὺς, Blessed is the King, that is to come in the name of the Lord.* And it was from this ancient popular prejudice, that the Apostles asked Jesus after his resurrection, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* It is, indeed, the ordinary title, which the Talmudists and ancient Rabbins give the Messias, *Hammelech Messiah*, Messias the King.

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Luke vii.  
16.

John iv.

25.

Matt. ii. 2,

4.

John i. 49.

Luke xxiii.

2;

xxiii. 3;

xix. 38.

Acts i. 6.



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Matt. xxii.  
42, 43, 44.

Ps. cx. 4.

John iv.  
42.  
Luke ii.  
38.

That the Messias in their opinion was also to be a Priest, is not so clearly apparent; yet it may probably be inferred: that they understood the 110th Psalm to respect the Messias is very likely, or rather certain, from that passage in the Gospel in which Jesus asked the Pharisees, *What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* and they answering, *The Son of David*, he returned upon them this puzzling question; *How then doth David in the spirit* (that is, prophetically) *call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand?* Which question confounded them, they not daring to deny that Psalm to respect the Messias, (it being the received opinion among the doctors,) nor yet seeing how the relations of Son and Lord were reconcileable: and admitting that Psalm was to be referred unto the Messias, they must consequently acknowledge him to be a Priest; for it is there said, *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.* It was also an opinion passing among them, that the Messias should be the Saviour of the world, as may be collected from that saying of the Samaritans; *We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world:* which being their opinion, and toward the salvation of men it being needful, that a reconciliation of them unto God, and an expiation of their sins, (which are sacerdotal acts) should be procured by him it seems to follow, that they had some notion of his priesthood. Indeed, the persuasion concerning a Messias to come, about the time when our Lord appeared, became diffused over the whole eastern

parts; as even Pagan Historians (Tacitus and Suetonius) do report<sup>s</sup>: and the conceit thereof was so vigorous in the Jews, that it excited them to rebellion, and encouraged them with great obstinacy to persist therein, as not only those Historians, but Josephus himself telleth us<sup>h</sup>; he also together with them (which is somewhat strange) referring the intent of those prophecies, and the verifying of that opinion, to the person of the Emperor Vespasian. The same conceit did then likewise occasion many pretenders and impostors (such as Theudas, and Judas the Galilean) to arise, disposing also the people so easily to be deluded by them, and so readily to run after them, as they did to their own harm.

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Thus according to the ancient Scriptures, interpreted and backed by the current tradition and general consent of God's people, it is sufficiently apparent, that a Messias (according to the notion premised) was to come into the world.

III. Now further, that Jesus, whom we acknowledge, was, indeed, that Messias, may appear plainly from the perfect correspondency of all circumstances belonging to the Messias's appearance,

<sup>s</sup> Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus et constans opinio esse in fatis, ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur.—Suet. in Vesp.

Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, “ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur.”—Tacitus Hist. v. [13.]

<sup>h</sup> Τὸ δὲ ἐπάραν αὐτοὺς μάλιστα πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον ἦν χρησμός ἀμφίβολος ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὐρημένος γράμμασιν, ὥς κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκείνων, ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας τις αὐτῶν ἀρξεί τῆς οἰκουμένης.—ἐδήλου δ' ἅμα τὴν περὶ Οὐεσπασιανοῦ τὸ λόγιον ἡγεμονίαν, ἀποδειχθέντος ἐπὶ Ἰουδαίας αὐτοκράτορος.—[De Bell. Jud. Lib. vi. cap. v. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 390.]

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and of all characters suiting his person, and of all things to be performed by him; together with whatever was to be consequent upon his presence and performances; according to ancient presignifications and predictions, and according to the passable opinions of God's people concerning him; the which, as they cannot possibly suit with any other person that hath yet appeared, or may reasonably be expected to come hereafter, so they exactly agree to the coming, and person, and practice, and success of Jesus.

Among circumstances the most considerable is the time; the which (both when it was said that he should come, and when it was fit that he should come) did very well agree to Jesus: *But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, &c., fulness* in regard to ancient prediction, in regard to fitness of season. For as the *Messias* was to be *The desire of all nations*, so Jesus did come then, when by special instinct a general expectation and desire of his coming was raised in the world; at the time, when the Patriarch Jacob foretold, that *Shiloh would come, viz. when the sceptre was just departed from Judah, and a Lawgiver from his feet*; Judæa being brought under the dominion of strangers; (such were the Romans, such was king Herod;) about the expiration of Daniel's weeks, (however commenced or computed,) the time determined *To finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to introduce everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy*, (as the Prophet speaks;) shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, according to

Gal. iv. 4.  
Eph. i. 10.

Hag. ii. 7.

Gen. xlix.  
10.

Dan. ix.  
24.

that of Daniel; *And after sixty and two weeks* SERM. XVII.  
*shall Messias be cut off, but not for himself: and*  
*the people of the prince that shall come shall* Dan. ix. 26.  
*destroy the city and the sanctuary; when that*  
*Zion, Out of which, as Isaiah tells us, the law* Isai. ii. 3; lix. 20.  
*was to go forth, and out of which the Redeemer*  
*should come, and turn ungodliness from Jacob,*  
*did stand and flourish; when the temple did*  
*stand, which the prophets Malachi and Haggai*  
*did predict should be illustrated by the presence*  
*of the Messias; The Lord, whom ye seek, saith* Mal. iii. 1.  
*Malachi, shall suddenly come to his temple; even*  
*the messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight:*  
*and, I will, saith Haggai, shake all nations, and* Hag. ii. 7.  
*the desire of all nations shall come; and I will*<sup>9</sup>  
*fill this house with glory, saith the Lord: the glory*  
*of this latter house shall be greater than the glory*  
*of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; before*  
*Jewry was desolated, Jerusalem destroyed, the*  
*tribes and families of Israel confounded, all that*  
*people wofully dispersed, and in a palpable man-*  
*ner deserted by God; when the Jewish Religion* Isai. ii. 4;  
*(which the Messias was to complete) was by a* xi. 6;  
*numerous accession of proselytes disseminated and* lxv. 25;  
*diffused through many provinces of that one vast* lxvi. 12.  
*empire, under which a great part of the world* Ps. lxxii. 7.  
*was united and settled durably in a calm state*  
*of peace and order: when one or two languages*  
*were commonly understood by all, and men thereby*  
*more easily conversed together; and when the*  
*ancient Scriptures being translated into Greek*  
*were so widely intelligible; when mankind was* Dan. xii. 4.  
*become generally civilized and cultivated with*  
*laws, and policy, and learning; with knowledge*

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of arts and philosophy; the world then beginning of itself to open its eyes, so as to discern the errors and deceits, by which it long had been abused; and was thence well prepared to learn, and rendered very susceptible of Divine truth; when all things thus conspired with good advantage to entertain the Christ, then *In the fulness of time*, in the right and *proper season*, (*καιρὸς ἰδῖος*, as St Paul speaketh,) *καιρῷ δεκτῷ*, in an acceptable time, as Isaiah prophesied, did Jesus come, to instruct and reform the world, as he professed<sup>1</sup>.

The other circumstances; the family out of which, the place where, the manner in which, Jesus was born, did also punctually correspond. He was to be an Israelite, according to the promise made of old to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and according to Moses's prophecy; *The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren*. He was to come out of the tribe of Judah; as the Patriarch Jacob in his last prophetic rapture did by various expressions intimate and signify. Particularly he was to rise out of the family of David, as the Prophets frequently and clearly did avouch; for he was, as Isaiah said, to be *A rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch going out of his roots; A righteous Branch*, according to Jeremiah, *whom God would raise to David*. He whom Solomon (that most wise, peaceable, and prosperous prince, who raised that glorious temple, the emblem of God's church)

<sup>1</sup> It was Porphyry's objection against Christianity, and an obvious one, why Christ did not come before, but in the latter days.

did presignify; and in whom the promises made to David concerning the perpetuity of his throne should be made good; *There shall not fail thee a man, &c.—Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever;* especially that absolute and irrevocable promise ratified by God's oath; *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne unto all generations:* who consequently by reason of conjunction in blood, and mutual representation, David prefiguring him, and he by succession into the imperial right expressing David, is by several of the prophets (by Jeremiah, by Ezekiel, by Hosea) called David: whence the learned among the Jews did consent, that the Messiah was to be the Son of David; *How say the Scribes, that Christ is the Son of David?* and, *What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* (it is our Lord's question to the Pharisees;) *They say unto him, The Son of David.* Yea the people were generally informed herein, and possessed with this sentiment; *Hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David?* was a popular speech in St John: *And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?* Now accordingly that Jesus came out of this country, tribe, and family, (that he was, as St Luke speaketh, *Of the house and lineage of David,* both according to natural and legal succession,) the express affirmation of Angels, the positive attestation of his parents and kindred, (who best knew,) the genealogies (according to the manner of those times and that nation) carefully

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1 Kings  
viii. 25.  
2 Sam. vii.  
16.  
2 Chron.  
vi. 16.  
Ps. lxxxix.  
3, 4;  
cxxxii. 11.  
Luke i. 32,  
69.  
Acts ii. 30.

Jer. xxxiii.  
17, 21, 22,  
26;  
xxx. 9.  
Hos. iii. 5.  
Ezek.  
xxxiv. 23,  
24;  
xxxvii. 24,  
25.  
Mark xii.  
35.  
Matt. xxii.  
42;  
xxi. 9.  
John vii.

Matt. xii.  
23.

Luke ii. 4.  
Matt. i. 20.  
Luke i. 32,  
69.

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preserved, and produced by the Evangelists, do assure us; neither doth it appear, that Jesus's adversaries did ever contest this point, but seem by their silence to have granted it, as easily and evidently proveable by authentic records and testimonies.

More precisely yet for the place of the Messias's birth, it was to be the town of Bethlehem; so the Prophet Micah foretold; thus cited by St Matthew: *Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.* So from thence did the learned judge; for being consulted by king Herod where Christ was to be born, they answered that in Bethlehem: and so also did the people commonly believe, as appears by the foressaid passage in St John; *Hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?* Now that Jesus should be there born, God himself took especial care, ordering it by his providence, that by imperial edict the world should be taxed, or registered; and that in order thereto the parents of Jesus should be forced to go from a distant place of their habitation unto Bethlehem, the place of their stock and family; that so both Jesus might be born there, and that good circumstance might appear certain by the unquestionable testimony of the censual tables, unto which (extant even in their times) Justin Martyr<sup>k</sup>, Tertullian<sup>l</sup>, and St Chry-

Mic. v. 2.  
Matt. ii. 6;

ii. 4, 5.

John vii.  
42.

<sup>k</sup> Κώμη δέ τίς ἐστιν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ Ἰουδαίων, ἀπέχουσα σταδίου λεῖ Ἱεροσολύμων, ἐν ᾗ ἐγενήθη Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, ὡς καὶ μαθεῖν δύνασθε ἐκ τῶν ἀπογραφῶν τῶν γενομένων ἐπὶ Κυρηναίου τοῦ ὑμετέρου ἐν Ἰουδαίᾳ γενομένου ἐπιτρόπου.—[Apol. i. Opp. p. 66 D.]

<sup>l</sup> Adv. Marc. iv. 19. [Sed et census constat actos sub Augusto

sostom refer those, who would be certified in that particular. SERM.  
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That place also of his parents' abode in Nazareth of Galilee, upon which was consequent his first appearance in way of action, was so ordered as to answer ancient predictions; according to which it was said, that *In the land of Zabulon and Nephthali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations, the people that walked in darkness did see a great light, and they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them the light shined.* Isai. ix. 1,  
2.  
Matt. iv.  
15, 16.

The manner also of the Messias's birth, was, as became such a Person, to be very extraordinary, and different from the common generation of men: for he was not only to be *One like the Son of man*, Dan. vii.  
13. as the Prophet Daniel terms him, and indeed, the Son of David, as all the prophecies declare of him, but the Son of God also; for, *Thou art my Son*, Ps. ii. 7,  
12. *this day have I begotten thee*, saith God of him in the second Psalm. And that which, in the first less perfect sense, was said of Solomon, (who prefigured him,) was, according to a more sublime meaning, and more exactly, to agree unto him: *He shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever: Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth:* and accordingly we see, that the Jews (both the wiser and the vulgar sort) did suppose that he should be the Son of God; 1 Chron.  
xxii. 10.  
2 Sam. vii.  
13.  
Ps. lxxxix.  
27. so St John the Baptist, so Nathanael, so Martha, John i. 34,  
49;  
xi. 27;  
vi. 69. so St Peter, and the other Apostles, when they Matt. xvi.  
16.

nunc in Judæa per Sentium Saturninum, apud quos genus ejus inquirere potuissent.—Opp. p. 433 A.]



- SERM.** became persuaded that Jesus was the Christ, did  
**XVII.** presently, according to anticipation of judgment  
 common to them with the people, confess him to  
 be the Son of God; the high priest himself inti-  
 mated the same, when he asked Jesus, *Art thou*  
*the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?* Yea, the devils  
 themselves were learned and orthodox in this  
 point; who cried out, *Thou art the Christ the Son*  
*of God.* Now that, according to those prophecies  
 and those traditions, the Messias should be in a  
 more than ordinary way, and (for the justifying of  
 God's truth together with the satisfying men)  
 should evidently appear to be the Son of God, it  
 was requisite, (at least convenient,) that his birth  
 should be procured by Divine operation, without  
 concurrence of a human father; (how otherwise, at  
 least how better, could it be apparent, that he was  
 both the Son of God and of man?) It was con-  
 sequently either necessary or fit, that he should be  
 born of a virgin<sup>m</sup>: and that he should, indeed, be so  
 born the Prophet Isaiah did signify, when he said,  
*The Lord himself shall give you a sign, (that*  
*is, shall perform somewhat very remarkable and*  
*strange: what was that?) Behold, a Virgin shall*  
*conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name*  
*Emmanuel; which prophecy that it belonged to*  
*the Messias appears from the report and de-*  
*scription which follows in the continuation of this*  
*particular prophecy concerning this child: For*  
*unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,*  
*and the government shall be upon his shoulders,*

<sup>m</sup> Εἰ μὲν σημεῖόν ἐστι τὸ διδόμενον, παράδοξος ἔστω καὶ ἡ γέννησις·  
 εἰ δὲ κοινὸς ὁ τρόπος τῆς γεννήσεως τοῦ παιδίου, μήτε σημεῖον λεγέσθω.  
 —Bas. in Isai. vii. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 529 A.]

and his name shall be called Wonderful, &c., SERM. XVII.  
 which description questionless appertaineth to the  
 Messias. The same Prophet signifies the same  
 concerning him, when he introduceth him speaking  
 thus; *And now, saith the Lord, that formed me* Isai. xlix.  
*from the womb to be his servant, &c.* Now that <sup>5.</sup>  
 Jesus in correspondence to this admirable cha-  
 racter was born of a virgin, his parents (persons  
 of unblameable integrity and innocence; so that  
 even the adversaries of Jesus appear not ever to  
 have offered to impeach them of imposture, or  
 to have troubled them about this report coming  
 from them) did constantly aver, Angels did attest  
 to their report, and God himself at several times  
 by audible voices from heaven declared Jesus to Matt. iii.  
 be his beloved Son. 17;  
xvii. 5.

The state and condition also, in which the  
 Messias was first to appear, was described to be a  
 state of external meanness and obscurity, of pov-  
 erty and wretchedness, in the eye of man: a state,  
 indeed, most convenient and proper for a spiritual  
 King, a most holy Priest, an absolute Prophet;  
 who was to teach, exercise, and exemplify the most  
 rough and harsh pieces of righteousness and piety,  
 (contempt of worldly vanities and pleasures; all  
 sorts of self-denial and abstinence; the virtues of  
 meekness, humility, and patience;) who was to  
 manage and execute his great undertakings, not by  
 natural or human force, but by a virtue supernatu-  
 ral and Divine; whose power consequently would  
 be more conspicuous in a state of visible mean-  
 ness and impotency, than in a condition of worldly  
 splendour and strength. That also which he was  
 to merit from God, and to undergo for the sake of

- SERM.** men, doth argue the same: that such the Messias's  
**XVII.** state was to be, there are divers mystical intima-  
 tions in the ancient Scripture; but the Prophet  
 Isai. liii. 2; Isaiah speaks it out most plainly: *He shall grow  
 up* (says he, describing that state) *before the Lord  
 like a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry  
 ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when  
 we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should  
 desire him:* and again: *Thus saith the Lord, the  
 Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One; to him  
 whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation ab-  
 horreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and  
 arise, princes also shall worship.*
- Phil. ii. 7. Now that Jesus appeared thus in a poor,  
 2 Cor. viii. servile, and despicable condition, we need not for  
 9. to prove; for as his followers avow it, so his adver-  
 saries are most ready to grant it; in the haughti-  
 ness of their conceit taking it for an advantage  
 Matt. xiii. against him, it proves a scandal to them: *Is not  
 55. this the carpenter's son? Is not this the carpenter,  
 Mark vi. 3. the son of Mary?* said they; and they were offend-  
 ed at him. Hence was it, that, as the Prophet  
 Isai. liii. 3. foretold, *He was despised and rejected of men, and  
 they esteemed him not.* Thus all the circumstances  
 of the Messias's coming were answered by those of  
 Jesus.

Now concerning the qualities and endowments  
 of the Messias, which constitute his personal cha-  
 racter, they are, as was expedient, such as should  
 dispose and fit him for the discharge of his great  
 employment and duty with utmost advantage, and  
 especial decency: in general, he was to be endued  
 with supereminent piety and sanctity, with perfect  
 innocence and integrity; so it is implied in all the

descriptions of his person and performances : *The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre : thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity ; wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows,* said the Psalmist of him : and, *Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins,* said Isaiah of him, (denoting the ready disposition of his mind to do whatever was good :) and, *He hath done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his lips,* saith the same Prophet of him again. Some particular virtues and abilities are also ascribed to him in an eminent degree : excellent wisdom and knowledge in spiritual matters, thus represented by Isaiah : *The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord ; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord :* eloquence also, skill and aptitude to instruct men ; which that most evangelical Prophet thus sets forth : *The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.* That he should be meek, and gentle, and compassionate toward men, in regard to their infirmities and afflictions ; mild and lowly in his conversation, the Prophets also signify : *He shall, feed his flock like a shepherd ; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young : A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench :* and, *Behold, saith Zechariah, thy King cometh unto thee ; he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and*

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Ps. xlv. 6,  
7.

Isai. xl. 5 ;

Isai. iii. 9 ;

Isai. xi. 2, 3 ;  
Isai. lxi. 11 ;

Isai. l. 4 ;

Isai. xl. 11 ;

Isai. xlii. 3.  
Matt. xii. 20.

Zech. ix. 9.  
Matt. xxi.

5.

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*riding upon an ass.* That he should be of a quiet and peaceable disposition, nowise fierce or contentious, turbulent or clamorous, Isaiah declares, thus saying of him, (as St Matthew cites him ;) *He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.* To his admirable patience in bearing afflictions and contumelies, Isaiah thus renders express testimony ; *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth ; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth : and, I gave my back to the smiter, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair : I hid not my face from shame and spitting.* His invincible courage and resolution in God's service, together with his strong confidence in God and entire submission to God's will, is thus described by the same Prophet : *The Lord God, saith he, will help me ; therefore I shall not be confounded ; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.—The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.* His general goodness and boundless charity toward men, the nature of his office and design, together with the whole course and tenor of his practice, such as they are represented, do suppose and imply.

Now that Jesus (our Lord) did in his person fully correspond, and did by his practice thoroughly make good this moral high character ; the story of his life with admirable simplicity and sincerity, without any semblance of disguise or artifice, represented by persons who most intimately were acquainted and long conversed with him, (or by

persons immediately informed by them,) and with greatest constancy attested to and maintained by them, doth plainly shew; wherein his incomparable piety toward God, his readiness to fulfil all righteousness, his entire submission and resignation of himself to God's will, the continual fervency, (devotion of all kinds, prayer, thanksgiving, fasting, practised in the most intense degree and in the most reverent manner,) his pure and ardent zeal for God's glory, his steadfast resolution, and indefatigable industry in God's service (making it his meat to do the will of him that sent him, and to perform his work).

Wherein an unspotted innocence, not only exempted from the vices and defilements, but raised above the vanities and impertinences of the world; secured by a magnanimous contempt, or neglect and abstinence from all worldly grandeur and splendour, all secular wealth and profit, all bodily delight and ease.

Wherein an admirable wisdom and prudence, expressed in all his demeanour and his discourse; in his discerning the secret thoughts and dissembled intentions of men; in his declaring and defending truth, detecting and confuting errors; in baffling learned and wily opposers; in eluding captious questions, and evading treacherous designs; in not meddling with the secular affairs and interests of men; in not encumbering himself with the needless cares and occupations of this life, nor entangling himself in the snares of this world; in dexterously accommodating his behaviour and his speech to the dispositions, the capacities, the needs of men; to the circumstances of things and exigencies of

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Matt. iii.  
15.  
Heb. x. 7.  
John xviii.  
11;  
xii. 27.  
Matt. xxvi.  
39;  
xiv. 23;  
xix. 13;  
xxi. 22;  
xi. 25;  
ix. 14.  
Luke vi.  
12;  
xxii. 32,  
41, 42;  
xxiii. 34.  
John xvii.  
1, 6, 11, 7;  
xi. 41;  
vi. 11;  
iv. 34;  
viii. 29;  
v. 30;  
ix. 4;  
xv. 10;  
xvii. 4.  
Matt. viii.  
20.  
2Cor. viii. 9.  
Luke ii. 40,  
52.  
Matt. ix. 4;  
xii. 10, 25;  
xvi. 1;  
xix. 3;  
xxii. 18,  
35, 46;  
xxi. 27.  
John x.  
39.  
Luke xx.  
3, 23.  
Matt. xii.  
14.  
Mark viii.  
33.  
Luke xii.  
14;  
xiii. 2;  
xiv. 7, 12;  
xviii. 17;  
xix. 11.  
John vii. 6;  
xvi. 4, 12,  
27;

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John iv.  
10.  
Matt. xiii.  
54.  
Mark vii.  
37.  
John xii.  
42;  
vii. 15, 46.  
Matt. vii.  
28.  
Luke ii.  
47;  
iv. 42.  
John viii.  
40;  
vii. 25, 26,  
7.  
Luke xx.  
26;

occasion, so as did best conduce to the promoting his grand design and undertaking; so that the people, observing his proceedings, could not but be astonished, and ask, *Whence hath this man this wisdom?* so that they could not but acknowledge, *He hath done all things well.*

Wherein particularly an excellent faculty of speaking and teaching, of interpreting and applying the Holy Scriptures, of proving and persuading God's truth, whereby he drew the people after him, converted many of them to amendment of life, convinced the most averse and incredulous; so that, *All that heard him were amazed at his understanding and answers;* so that, *All bare witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth;* so that the officers sent to apprehend him did confess, *Never man spake like this man.*

xvi. 15.  
Matt. xii.  
14;  
xxiii. 19;  
xv. 6, 14;  
viii. 26.  
Luke xix.  
45, 46.  
John ii. 15.  
Luke ix.  
22, 51;  
xviii. 32;  
xxii. 15.  
Matt. xvi.  
21.  
Mark x.  
33, 34.

Wherein an invincible fortitude and gallantry, expressed in his most constant profession and undaunted maintenance of truth and goodness; in his encountering the prejudices, detecting the frauds, reproving the vices of the age, though upheld by the greatest persons and by prevalent factions; in his plain dealing and free speaking with all sincerity and all authority, in his zealous checking and chastising profane abuses; in his disregarding the rash and fond opinions of men, their spiteful obloquies, harsh censures, slanderous imputations, and unjust reproaches; in his foreseeing the greatest of dangers and worst of mischiefs that could arrive to man, yet cheerfully encountering and firmly sustaining them; sustaining all the violent oppositions and assaults which the most virulent

malice and envy inflamed with superstition and blind zeal could set against him. SERM.  
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Wherein a most quiet and peaceable disposition, apparent from his never attempting any resistance, or any revenge upon provocation of frequent great affronts and injuries; from his never raising any tumults, nor fomenting any quarrels, nor meddling with any litigious matters, nor encroaching upon any man's right or office; by his ready compliance with received customs, by his paying tribute, although not due from him, to prevent offence; by his frequent instructions and exhortations to peace, to innocence, to patience, to due obedience, to performing due respect to superiors, and paying customs to governors, to the yielding a docile ear, and an observance to those who sat in Moses's chair.

Wherein an exceeding meekness and gentleness, demonstrated in all his conversation; in resenting very moderately, or rather not resenting at all, most unjust hatreds, outrageous calumnies, bitter reproaches and contumelies from his adversaries; very perverse neglects and ingratitude from multitudes of people; many infirmities, stupidities, distrusts, basenesses, and treacheries from his own nearest friends and followers; in his passing over and easily pardoning the greatest offences committed against him, yea sometime extenuating and excusing them; in the mildness of his censures, expostulations, and reproofs; in his tempering the fierce zeal, hard censure, and rigorous proceeding against persons unhappy, or faulty; in his tender pity of all persons in any want, distress, or trouble; in his earnest commiseration and bewailing the



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Luke ix.  
41;  
xiii. 34.  
John xiii.  
21.  
Luke xxiii.  
34.  
John v. 41;  
viii. 50, 54;  
vi. 15;  
viii. 28;  
xi. 4;  
xvii. 4.  
Luke vii.  
16, 29;  
ix. 43;  
viii. 56, 39;  
xvii. 18;  
xviii. 43.  
Matt. viii.  
4;  
ix. 30;  
xii. 16;  
xix. 17.  
Mark v.  
43;  
viii. 26.  
Matt. ix.  
24.  
John xiii.  
4.  
Matt. ix.  
10;  
viii. 3.  
  
Luke v.  
29;  
xv. 2;  
xix. 5;  
vii. 36;  
xi. 37.  
John xii. 7.  
Matt. xxvi.  
10;  
  
ix. 2, 22.  
Luke xii.  
4.  
John xv.  
14;  
xiii. 33.

vengeance he foresaw impendent on his persecutors, and in his praying for their pardon.

Wherein a marvellous humility and lowliness of mind expressed by his not seeking honour or applause from men, but shunning and rejecting it; his not assuming to himself, but ascribing all to God, and referring all to his glory, by his making no ostentation of his miraculous power and high endowments, but, so far as would comport with the prosecution of his main purpose, (the glory and service of God, the good and welfare of men,) carefully suppressing and concealing them; in his without dissatisfaction or discouragement bearing scorn, and contempt, and obloquy; in his willing condescension to the meanest offices and employments; in his free and familiar conversation with all sorts of people, with the lowest and most despicable, with the worst and most odious, for their good; he not despising the poorest or vilest wretch, who seemed capable of receiving any benefit from him; in his easiness to be entreated, and readiness to comply with the desires of any man imploring succour or relief from him; in his being ready, not only to oblige, but to be obliged and receive courtesies from any man; to answer the invitation of a Pharisee or of a Publican; to accept favourably the well-intended respect of a poor woman; in the softness and sweetness of his language to all men, particularly to his disciples; *Be of good courage, daughter; Son, be of good cheer; I say unto you, my friends; Little children, I am a little while with you.* Such was his style and conversation toward his inferiors.

Wherein an unparalleled patience in contentedly

and cheerfully, through all the course of his life, undertaking and undergoing whatever by God's will and providence was imposed on him, how grievous and distasteful soever to human apprehension or sense; the extremest penury, the hardest toil, the vilest disgraces, the most bitter pains and anguishes incident to body or mind, the most horrid and most sorrowful of deaths, all these aggravated by the conscience of his own clearest innocence, by the extreme ingratitude of those who misused him, by the sense of God's displeasure for the sin of man, by all the imbittering considerations which a most lively piety and tender charity suggested; in submitting to all this most freely and most calmly, without any regret, any disturbance.

Wherein an unexpressible and unconceivable charity, (*A charity, indeed, which surpasseth knowledge, as St Paul speaketh,*) evidenced in the constant strain and tenor of his whole life, passing through all his designs, all his words, and all his actions: for, as St Peter says in the Acts, he did nothing else but go about doing good, (*διήλθεν εὐεργετῶν*), and benefiting men; curing their diseases, relieving their wants, instructing their minds, reforming their manners, drawing them to God and goodness, disposing them to the attainment of everlasting bliss and salvation. It is love, we may observe, which was the soul, that animated and actuated him in all things; which carried him with unwearied resolution and alacrity through all the cruel hardships and toils, through all the dismal crosses and ignominies he endured: his life was in effect but one continual expression of charity,

SERM.  
XVII.

John xviii.  
11;  
xii. 27.  
Matt. xxvi.  
39;  
viii. 20.  
2 Cor. viii.  
9.

Eph. iii.  
19.

Acts x. 38.  
Matt. iv.  
23;  
ix. 35.

SERM.  
XVII.John xv.  
13.

(differently exerting itself according to various opportunities, and circumstances, and needs of men,) the which was consummated, and sealed by his death; the highest instance of charity that could be; for, *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Wherein, finally, (in which life, I say, of Jesus,) all holiness, all virtue, all goodness (suitable to him, who was to be not only the teacher and the persuader of the best life, but a living standard and pattern thereof; who was to merit of God in man's behalf, to conciliate God's favour towards us, and appease his anger against us) do shine and sparkle with a beauty and a lustre transcending all expression. All which particulars might, were it now proper and seasonable, be thoroughly declared by instances extant in the evangelical History; so that the characteristical qualities of the Messias do clearly and abundantly agree to Jesus our Lord.

His performances should next be considered and compared; but the time doth not admit that we should now proceed any further.

Rev. v. 13. Now, *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.*

END OF VOL. V.



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